

The LUTHERAN



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SINGING FOR CHRISTMAS

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DECEMBER 23, 1953

ENTS



If Christmas Be Kept

By GRACE NOLL CROWELL

If CHRISTMAS be kept a splendid shining thing,
Sacred and holy in the hearts of men;
If there be selfless gifts that we can bring
To the poor and needy, truly never again
Need we be quite bereft—though ills betide,
And dangers threaten us, for there will be
A heavenly brightness moving by our side,
And hope will spring in hearts eternally.

The Light of the world is centered in the hour
That gave the Christ Child to the waiting earth.
His star still blooms—a radiant silver flower
As a glorious sign and symbol of his birth.
If men keep shining, steadfast faith in Him,
They can walk the earth by light that will not dim.

The LUTHERAN

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THE CHURCH IN THE NEW

Biggest year in home missions

Not since the great days of home missions—1885 to 1905, when nearly a quarter of the now-existing United Lutheran congregations in New York and Pennsylvania were organized—had there been such a year as 1953. The 1953 total will be the highest in history.

Fourteen United Lutheran congregations were organized in November, the ULC Board of American Missions was told at its Dec. 10 meeting. Fourteen more are scheduled this month. This will bring the 1953 total to 64, with perhaps a few others yet to be reported.

Peak year in the past was 1903, when 61 congregations now in United Lutheran synods came into existence. After 1907 the church-planting surge wore down as the tide of immigration from North European countries declined. The 1930's were the lowest home-mission period in United Lutheran synods since the 1820's.

Upturn began in 1945. In the last three years 160 ULC congregations were formed, largest three-year total since 1890-92. Gathering postwar Lutheran refugees from northern Europe has accounted for a dozen of the new churches. But the big mission field—which United Lutherans are seriously invading for the first time—consists of 75 million U.S. and Canadian citizens who are not members of any church.

Missions are widespread

In a few areas United Lutheran synods never went out of the home mission business, even during the depression decade. The Northwest Synod (from Wisconsin to Montana) continued organizing new congregations every year (56 since

1930). The thirties were the biggest decade for home missions in western Canada.

This year the establishment of ULC congregations has been under way in all parts of the United States and Canada. The New York and New England Synod, Ministerium of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia and Wartburg synods have organized the largest number of new churches they have established in at least two decades. The first new congregations in the Iowa Synod in 11 years were organized.

The 1953 congregations, according to THE LUTHERAN's records in mid-December are in these synods: California—6 . . . Canada—1 . . . Florida—1 . . . Georgia—1 . . . Alabama—3 . . . Illinois—1 . . . Indiana—2 . . . Iowa—2 . . . Kansas—1 . . . Kentucky-Tennessee—2 . . . Maryland—3 . . . Michigan—2 . . . Nebraska—1 . . . New Jersey—2 . . . New York—5 . . . North Carolina—1 . . . Northwest—1 . . . Ohio—4 . . . Pacific—5 . . . Pennsylvania Ministerium—4 . . . Pittsburgh—3 . . . South Carolina—3 . . . Texas—2 . . . Virginia—4 . . . Wartburg—2 . . . Western Canada—1.

Pocketbook must be stretched

Like a father with a fast-growing family, the United Lutheran Church's Board of American Missions was figuring the family checkbook this month. There is not enough money in sight to support the missions organized this year and in previous years. There is practically no margin for new members of the family expected in 1954.

The board usually pays the full salary of the pastor of a new congregation during the first year (average is \$3,000

house allowance). It pays a decreasing proportion of the salary during the first 10 years. The congregation is then expected to be self-supporting.

The board also lends part of the money (on second mortgages) for buying parsonages, building sites, and church construction. The board's 1953 expenditures through Nov. 30 were \$2,515,108.

The ULC budget for 1954 provides the board \$2,206,500—if the church's benevolence goal is fully met. Allotments from the Women's Missionary Society and sums repaid on loans to congregations are sufficient to balance the 1954 budget. They won't make up the difference if 1954 is another record-breaking home mission year.

A new plan was proposed by the board this fall. Self-supporting congregations will be invited to sponsor missions at \$500 and \$1,000 apiece. Only congregations which pay their apportionment 100 per cent will be accepted as sponsors. Among the first to agree to the plan were First Church, Los Angeles, and Richfield Church, Minneapolis.

Christmas competition

Fifty thousand of 110,000 Reading, Pennsylvania, citizens crowded into a mile-long stretch of the city's streets to see the Christmas parade. In the city square the throng was led in prayer as the parade began. The story of Jesus from the Annunciation to the Flight into Egypt was told in a long series of floats entered by Lutheran and Roman Catholic groups. Eleven bands played Christmas hymns. After the parade the people sang Christmas carols in the streets.

Community Christmas observances, sponsored by churches in hundreds of cities, were competing for public attention with department-store commercialization and office liquor-parties. Five million Christmas seals advising Americans to substitute Christian worship for alcoholic "Christmas cheer" (*see photo*) had been distributed in churches and Sunday schools.

Pageants, parades, public carol singing, and outdoor home decorations featuring the Nativity scene were more widespread than ever.



REVERENCE INSTEAD OF ALCOHOL

Cut out Christmas liquor, Christmas stamps advised

The Detroit city council adopted a resolution stating that Christmas "has been depleted by materialistic and unnecessary exploitation so that our children are not made aware that the celebration is of the birth of Christ instead of the exchange of gifts." The council called for a "citywide campaign of positive suggestions to bring out the true meaning of Christmas."

Canadians get advice

"The choice before the Canadian people," the United Church of Canada announced, "is either a highly commercialized Christmas with widespread extravagance and ostentatious display and debauchery—or a truly Christian holiday event with worship and music, and thousands of joyous, happy home and business celebrations."

The Dec. 24-28 long holiday week-

end would be "largely a time of drunkenness and debauchery" if the wrong choice is made, said the church.

Churchmen offered a six-point program for reverent celebrating. 1) Nativity scenes to be erected in prominent locations in towns and cities. 2) Church worship, with proclamation that God came to earth to establish good will among men. 3) Emphasis on "giving rather than getting, generosity rather than gluttony." Canada should lead the way in shipment of wheat to the needy.

4) Christmas cards with religious messages. Nativity scenes in store windows. Community carol singing. 5) Social drinking cut to minimum. Christmas parties in homes, offices, and factories without liquor. 6) Take drunken drivers off the road. The Christmas season must not be a time of tragedy.



CHRISTMAS STORY ON CITY STREET
Nativity scene in Santa Monica, California, parade

Lutheran merger blueprint is ready

A blueprint for organization of a new church that would be created if four Lutheran bodies merge was completed this month by their joint committee and will be submitted to their conventions in 1954. Involved in the negotiations are the American Lutheran, Evangelical Lutheran, Lutheran Free, and United Evangelical Lutheran churches, with a combined membership of about 1,800,000 persons.

The blueprint proposes that:

The new church have 18 districts. Upon nominations of their conferences, they would elect the delegates to the biennial convention which would serve as the governing body of the church. The convention would have about 1,000 delegates—half clergy and half laymen.

The only two officers of the church would be a president and a secretary, both elected by the convention.

There would be a church council, consisting of the president, the 18 district presidents, and a layman elected from each of the districts, which would have charge of doctrinal matters. Under the church council would be two commissions—one devoted to evangelism and the other to research and social action.

Business affairs of the church would be vested in a board of trustees, elected by the general convention. Between conventions, a joint council made up of the president, secretary, church council, and trustees would serve as the interim legislative body.

The church would have six working divisions: American missions, world missions, education, charities, publications, and pensions. It is proposed that there be only one theological seminary, but operating in different places. One of the present seminaries might specialize in training missionaries, another in pastors

of rural churches and a third in graduate study.

Baltic countries are captives

Russians had made a claim this month that even they couldn't believe. They announced that the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania—had come into the Soviet Union voluntarily after the war. This month a U.S. congressional committee was collecting facts about the "seizure and forced incorporation of the Baltic countries by the U.S.S.R."

Practically every Baltic DP now in the United States would have been glad to testify. Among those who did were two Lutheran pastors, Rudolf Kiviranna and Jekabs Kullitis. Pastor Kiviranna described how thousands of Estonian men, women and children were deported in cattle vans for opposing the Communist conquest of their country. "In the Soviet State," said Pastor Kullitis, "the devil himself is working. I humbly pray God that the Christian nations of the world will join in liberating those living under his machinations."

A Roman Catholic priest appeared before the committee wearing a mask to conceal his identity so his relatives in Lithuania would not suffer on his account. He told of brutal Communist treatment of the clergy in the anti-church campaign.

Mary will be seen

A new crop of rumors about visions of the Virgin Mary will be produced by the decision of Pope Pius. The pope announced that the coming year is to be "dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." Special indulgences will be granted for pilgrimages to churches and shrines devoted to Mary worship.

First rumor that Mary had been seen came from Hydrequant, near Boulogne, France. Ten people claimed they saw the

vision on Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The bishop of Arras, Victoire Perrin, was said to have begun an investigation into reports that a miracle had taken place.

More than a million Mexican workers began the Marian Year by pilgrimages to shrines of the Virgin throughout the country this month. Largest pilgrimage was to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, where a half-million workers assembled. Masses were celebrated at the basilica every half-hour from 4 A.M. to sunset.

Philadelphia's miracle bush in Fairmount Park, where visions of the Virgin Mary were reported in September, was still under police guard this month. A trickle of worshipers still kept coming.

No free Bibles in New Jersey schools

Gideon Society members have been untiring in giving away Bibles wherever they can. They supply Bibles found in hotel rooms. Last month they gave 30 to be placed on Pan-American clippers flying to Latin America (*see photo*).

Public schools have been favorite places recently for Gideons to give away Bibles. A year ago they distributed notices to pupils in the Rutherford, New Jersey, schools that, if their parents would give written consent, they would receive free Bibles. Of 2,200 children, 615 brought signed consent slips to school.

Each child was to receive a volume containing the New Testament and the books of Psalms and Proverbs. But the Bibles were not distributed. A Jew and a Roman Catholic secured an injunction halting the give-away on the grounds that the Bibles are a Protestant translation, the King James Version.

This month a decision in the case had come from the New Jersey Supreme Court. Distributing the Protestant Bibles,

said the court, is a violation of the federal and New Jersey constitutions. To permit the distribution in public schools is favoritism toward one religion.

"We find," said the court's unanimous decision, "that the Gideon Bible is a se-



BIBLES FOR PAN-AMERICAN PLANES
But not for New Jersey schools

tarian book . . . To permit the distribution of the King James version of the Bible in the public schools of this state would be to cast aside all the progress made in the United States and throughout New Jersey in the field of religious tolerance and freedom."

And so forth

First Roman Catholic bishop of Stockholm since the Reformation is Johanne E. E. Mueller, named to the office last month by Pope Pius. Sweden has 20,000 Roman Catholics. This year Roman Catholics have established bishoprics also in Denmark and Norway. Sweden was Roman Catholic until 1527 when Lutheranism became the state religion.

COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA are being galvanized to new life under the determined leadership of their presidents, both of whom are military men. Both wish to be known as politically conservative but economically progressive.

General Rojas Pinilla seized power in Colombia from reactionary Laureano Gomez last June. Among other things, he put a stop to civil war in the country and has laid down a program of national development, including—for the first time—immigration and colonization schemes. This new open-door policy, however, will probably attract only Roman Catholics, especially as the new agreement with the Vatican grants to the Roman Church monopolistic control over religious and educational matters in more than 50 per cent of the country.

Of course, this agreement includes the isolated islands of Providencia and San Andres, which broke into the news recently when President Pinilla paid them an unprecedented visit and decreed a New Deal for them, too (roads, tourists, hotels, etc.). Actually, these offshore possessions, once British but half-forgotten since pirate days, are reputed to have a population of several thousand people who are 90 per cent Baptist. What will Rome do with a "monopoly" like that?

New day in Venezuela

COLONEL PEREZ JIMENEZ "assumed power" in Venezuela a year ago. This year—the 80th anniversary of the Monroe Doctrine—there was a full week of bewildering festivities calculated to impress even the most skeptical with the dynamic nature of the regime. Scores of public works were inaugurated or completed during the hectic week which

culminated in the opening of the superb new highway from Caracas to the sea. \$289 million have been spent in this gigantic development program in the past year. Not bad for a country of five million inhabitants!

Caracas itself is an incredible example of city-transformation from colonial capital into sophisticated cosmopolis. A tunnel goes through part of the old city and on either side of this sunken boulevard soar twin skyscrapers—flood-lighted at night—with a helicopter landing field between them.

THE NEWS THAT THE U.S. would grant full independence to Puerto Rico, if requested, raised speculation as to a considerable realignment of allegiances in the Caribbean area. It seems that Venezuela is more than eager to snap up any loose fragments of empire which the British, French, Dutch, or Americans relinquish. There is even a substantial rumor in Caracas to the effect that some sort of "understanding" already exists whereby the three Guianas and many of the islands, such as Puerto Rico, are slated to become states in the U.S. of Venezuela. British Guiana speaks English, not Spanish, but so—apparently—do Providencia and San Andres which belong to Colombia.

It is interesting, at least, to stand in front of a map and speculate on possible results of such a great Caribbean union. One would be the ranking of Venezuela as the second most powerful nation—next to Brazil—in Latin America. The Perez Jimenez doctrine, only one year old, seems to be getting ready to assume its full share of the burden of the octogenarian Monroe dictum.

—STEWART W. HERMAN

NO ASSEMBLY SINCE the inception of the United Nations has seen a closing as dramatic as that which rang down the curtain on the eighth, when the president of the host country came, unexpectedly, to make what was really the closing speech. It was the type of speech often made at the beginning of an assembly offering a new approach to an old and deadlocked issue, the control of atomic energy.

If this proposition had been presented at the beginning of the assembly, long committee discussion and the almost-immediate expression of the opinions of governments would have followed. Now actual discussion will be delayed and there will be opportunity for the people themselves in the various countries to give their reactions, through debate and comment, so their opinions are felt before an official position is announced.

THE GREAT stumbling block of any disarmament proposal has always been international control. No one has been able to suggest an acceptable plan for setting up what would really be a group of international snoopers. The Soviet suggestion of an international honor system has been viewed with suspicion, not to say ridicule. Now the United States has abandoned this as a negative approach and has put forward the idea that the use of atomic energy in a positive way be the primary concern.

This is a definite shift from fruitless debate on a "paper plan" to a concrete suggestion for actual work. It is most interesting to see this at the conclusion of an assembly that has been relatively undramatic, largely because it has dealt most with problems of a realistic and practical nature.

One committee spent almost its entire time on expanded technical assistance and how best to proceed in the development of underdeveloped countries. Related to this same point, another committee majored in evaluating and recommending for the educational, social and political advancement of trust territories. The committee which other years have discussed the rights of women in the abstract this year shaped its debate around technical assistance in promoting the rights of women and in the prevention of discrimination. All the relief work in Palestine, Korea, Refugees, UNICEF (the international children's program) were pushed much earlier in the agenda and the discussions centered not so much on whether or not they were to be continued, but more on how much greater effort could be put into them.

Maybe it isn't significant, but it does seem as this Eighth Assembly closes that people of every nation living under the threat of extinction by the atomic bomb are turning their attention to solving the fundamental problems that make war, and are trying to build a world in which the atom bomb will be outlawed not by laws but by universal brotherhood in action.

WHEN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER entered the UN building he went first to the Meditation Room. He knows the UN must succeed and he knows that some plan which is not just a hunting down of spies but which offers a possibility of constructive work toward peace must succeed if mankind is to survive. If he finds the key to this in a room dedicated to meditation and prayer, those who believe as he does must give him significant support.

—ELLEN-JARDIN NOLDE

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S address to the UN General Assembly overshadowed the Bermuda conference of the "Big Three." The conference seemed unable to produce many tangible results. One constructive agreement was to accept a Russian offer to meet in Berlin to discuss the reunification of Germany and an Austrian peace treaty.

The spotlight quickly shifted to the UN, where the American president delivered a major address to a listening radio-television audience estimated at 300 million here and overseas. His fresh approach to the East-West deadlock over atomic energy raised new hopes that "peace on earth" may become something more than a nostalgic phrase. He put the search for peace back at the top of the world's agenda.

Peace through fear?

The atomic "facts of life" which Eisenhower described are enough to create a spasm of fear in men's hearts. He made it clear that atomic aggression would be met in kind, and that global chaos would be the result. If the speech had ended here, it would have been just one more move in the chess game of power politics which tries to achieve peace through fear.

He proposed an alternative to atomic annihilation which bore the earmarks of the American conscience—a conscience which has been struggling for years with a feeling of guilt over having given birth to the atomic bomb. He asked the other nations, including Russia by name, to join the U.S. in forming a new UN agency for developing the peaceful use of atomic power.

This could begin at once, he said, if each of the nations with atomic stock-

piles would give some of their fissionable material for constructive use under UN supervision. While negotiations were going on for control of atomic weapons, the same nuclear energy could be put to use in agriculture, medicine, and the production of power for underdeveloped areas. Such a program might recapture, on a global scale, the waning idealism of the U.S. Point Four program. Little by little, experience in using atomic power co-operatively might lead to full-scale atomic control.

Peace through love

Without using a religious vocabulary, Eisenhower really put his proposal in a setting which showed the effect of religious thought. The production of food, the healing of disease, the development of natural resources put the needs of mankind at the heart of the search for peace.

Twenty centuries of Christianity have planted deeply the idea that love is the only lasting basis for peace. Over a century of missionary enterprise which combined a ministry to men's bodies with concern for their souls has provided the setting for modern programs of human helpfulness.

The growing closeness of world community gives strategic importance to Christian missions. The ongoing missionary program, when divorced from western culture and carried out in the spirit of Christ, is a real pipeline to the mind of Asia. The love of Christ is the one basic ingredient in any formula for peace. The proclaiming of that love is one job we cannot delegate to heads of state. The responsibility is ours and the time is short.

—ROBERT E. VAN DEUSEN

CHRISTMAS BRINGS LIGHT

By ROBERT J. McCracken

**The world will never be completely dark again because
a Child born at Bethlehem gave men their highest hope**

JESUS SAID, "I am the light of the world." Long acquaintance with this familiar sentence does not make it any less astounding. The thing about it that rivets attention is the magnitude of the claim. There is something here for which there is absolutely no precedent or parallel in history. There have been leaders among men whose personal pretensions have been unbounded but there has never been one who has come within sight of a claim as stupendous as this.

Think of it! A carpenter, hailing from an obscure village in a province under Roman rule, without wealth or official position, the author of no books, the organizer of no institutions, his friends fishermen and peasants, calmly and deliberately presents himself as the Light of the World. The majority of his contemporaries never even heard of him.

Yet year by year multitudes all over the world assemble in places of worship reared to the glory of his name and celebrate his birthday. The claim that nearly two thousand years ago seemed ridiculous and preposterous has been amazingly fulfilled.

HE IS NOT ONLY the central figure of history. He is the moral and spiritual illuminator of the world. With his coming a new spirit entered into human life.

Behind our belief in the inalienability of human rights is his estimate of the infinite worth of every soul. Behind our

conception of the dignity of human labor is a workshop in Nazareth. Back of every movement for the redemption of society, as on our ambulances and mercy ships, is the most sacred of all symbols, a cross.

The difference Jesus has made in the world is the difference between night and day. I am not saying that all was completely dark before he came. Many stars of truth had shone prior to his advent, but they were not enough.

Among the Gentiles, the temples of the gods were unfrequented and in many cases falling into ruins. Men were skeptical and cynical. Pilate's question, "What is truth?" was typical of the mental climate of the time. The only philosophy that had taken any sort of hold was an open and frank materialism. Yet everywhere there was an awareness of a personal and corporate need, a need sharpened and intensified by the fact that the Roman Empire, the buttress of law and order and civilization, was slowly but surely disintegrating.

IN THAT HARD Roman world the Christian church took its rise. Its members banded themselves together into the closest unity the world has ever seen. Read what they had to say for themselves and what do you find? For them the darkness was past and true light was shining. They knew that Jesus was the light of life shining in a dark world in the same way that they knew the difference between night and day. They knew it experimentally, because when they ac-

Dr. McCracken is minister of the Riverside Church in New York City.

cepted him they were no longer bewildered and confused. The way was clear before them. They had not only found the meaning of life; they had found life itself.

To those who give him a fair chance Jesus still proves himself the light of the world. When we take him seriously, open our lives to his spirit we find his promise true; we no longer walk in darkness but have the light.

No one else does for us what he does—changes our outlook, develops new instincts in us, creates in us a concern for the welfare of others. He is the moral and spiritual illuminator of our world touching nothing that he does not ennoble—our conception of God, our estimate of man, our sense and scale of values. It is humiliating to think how reluctant men have been to take him seriously, but one fact stands out clear and incontrovertible: whenever and wherever he has been taken seriously light has come to the world.

More and more Christians have resolved to seek the application of the principles of Jesus to the economic and political life of men, with the result that more and more our social ideals are approximating to his standards—our ideals for the family, the school, the hospital, for social service. In the study of the man of letters, in the classroom of the teacher, in the councils of economists and industrialists, in the discussions of workmen in factories and mines, the influence of Christ is felt, even by those who do not acknowledge his claim.

IS THIS TOO OPTIMISTIC a reading of the situation? With the world, like the old Roman world, on the brink of chaos can it be maintained that the difference Christ has made is the difference between night and day? After all, it may be pro-



tested, Christianity has had nineteen hundred years in which to work, yet things seem to be going from bad to worse. There are some who say quite candidly that so far as they can see, in times as terrible as these, Christmas only has a message for those who fly to it as an escape from reality.

IT IS DISAPPOINTING that nineteen hundred years after his advent men should still be living in insecurity and fear. It is no less disappointing that our generation like its predecessors should refuse to make room for Christ and to take him seriously. It is not his way of life that has been tried and found wanting; whenever and wherever it has been tried it has brought light to the world, as he said it would. He has shown us the way; he does not force us into it. He is not the dictator of the world, resorting to com-

pulsion to extend his empire. He waits patiently until people see the light he has brought.

It is not the Prince of Peace who has failed our generation; it is our generation that has failed the Prince of Peace. As H. G. Wells said, "The truth is the Galilean has been too great for our small hearts."

This is no time to be apologetic about the Christmas Festival. In the message it brings lies the one hope of the world. It is responsible for the fact that there are millions of men and women who have been so affected by the principles and spirit of Jesus that, whether they acknowledge his influence or not, their own influence is thrown into the right side of the scale so visibly trembling in these days between good and evil, right and wrong, love and hate.

There is no need to apologize for Christmas. With the coming of Christ

there was given to the world the quality and principle of true living. The twenty-fifth of December serves as an annual reminder that it is more blessed to give than to receive, that force must ultimately bow before gentleness, that love is stronger than hate. The twenty-fifth of December stands for the fact that love is the very groundwork of human relationship and the life-principle of society.

MAN COMES to his senses at Christmas. He is mad when he scorns love and fights for his own selfish interests. He is sinning against the very nature of things when he hates and quarrels, and will not be at peace with his fellows. His real life is the life he sees and responds to at Christmastide when feuds are forgotten, when grudges are buried, when old enmities are laid away, when the motto of everyone is "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

By MARTIN O. DIETRICH

Russian officers laughed at the idea that God could take on human form and live among men

DURING THE Christmas season we will hear again and again the phrase from the Gospel of St. John: "And the Word was made flesh."

We shall probably not think anything of it, see nothing wrong in it and accept it without much consideration.

But what I now relate actually hap-

pened and was told me by a young vicar who was directly involved. He lived to tell me about it, though his life was several times almost forfeited to his captors.

HE WAS a prisoner of war in Russia. In his camp, worship services were forbidden. At the approach of Christmas, the men at the camp yearned for the service and put their request to the commandant. Surprisingly, he acceded to their wishes, but demanded a Russian translation of all that was to be said.

Dr. Dietrich, now pastor of Ascension Church, Snyder, New York, was for more than five years representative in Germany for the U.S.A. Committee of the Lutheran World Federation.



there is a God—taking on flesh like ours!”

AND IT IS INCREDIBLE! Not alone for those trained in the dogma that only matter is real, but for anyone who looks into the skies and is aware of his distance from the Eternal One. This central fact of Christianity will remain a point at which we all lose our breath and any language to describe it. It dare not make sense to those who are set upon destroying the Christian faith. It does not make sense to a person who forgets that today's church, just as its Christ once showed it, must again move into the world of need and despair, of joy and hope, in order to fill it with His power and grace.



The young student of theology wrote his sermon in German, using the text noted above. Then he sat down with several Russian translators to the task of transferring his thoughts into Russian. When he told them his text they were astonished. It just made no sense to them at all. He tried to tell them that the “Word” was God, His will and love, His essence and being. The “flesh,” he tried to tell them, was our earthly estate, and he referred to the meat in the butcher’s shop for lack of an understandable parallel.

The Russians at first smiled and looked at each other, then broke into laughter. The whole thing was just too silly for words. It was ludicrously incredible, one of the opiates which lulled people to sleep, a scheme by the church to make fools of people. “How could a God, an idea, one of those invisible things make an appearance? The only things which are real are bread, steel, earth and the muscles in your arms. God—if

Today the young theological student is a vicar in a small parish in Germany. He will ask himself frankly “What does it mean to my people, to my world and to me that Christ was incarnate, that God descended from the heights of glory to the dust of Bethlehem, that the Word was made flesh?”

He has thought and prayed about it. His Christmas sermon will be filled with a conviction that was given to him as his spirit wrestled in earnest combat with those who did not want to know the Christ.

Linda Planned the Party

By JOYCE VERNON DRAKE

**The major's wife thought the children would enjoy
a celebration where they could give to others**

LINDA IS THE WIFE of a young major in the Air Force. She is a college graduate, beautiful, popular and lots of fun. Her father is a pastor in a small town, and she was reared in a parsonage.

Last year when the preparations began for a Christmas program for 2,000 children on a military base in the Far West, Linda was made chairman.

The committee wanted a celebration that would be adequate for the needs of all. It had been the custom to have the parties at staggered hours in the base theater, with presents and treats for all. The chaplains, the Red Cross and the various welfare committees were willing to work long and arduously.

"IT'S A PROBLEM," said the post chaplain, the Red Cross field director and the chairman of the Welfare Committee, envisioning the years before.

"It's a madhouse," said the theater officer, perspiring freely as he remembered the ice cream cones, the sticky seats and the untidy aisles of the theater.

Here was where Linda's early training came in. She came up with a revolutionary idea.

"Why not a white-gifts-for-others party?" asked Linda.

"White-gifts-for-others party! What's that?" came from the president of the Officers' Wives Club, who had spent last Christmas in Kwajalein.

"White gifts!" The Red Cross worker rubbed his head. Gifts, large gifts, small

gifts, most any kind of gifts he well knew. But *white* gifts!

BUT THE CHAPLAIN KNEW. He had a nostalgic picture of a snug little church back home, filled with Christmas greens and white candles, and crowded to the doors. No gifts for the people, old and young, who attended the service, but each with a white-wrapped gift for others!

"Each child attending the Christmas party at the theater would bring a white gift of toys or groceries, fruit or candy for another child," explained Linda. She knew that many children on the base were children of officers and had everything they needed. Then there were the children of airmen whose Christmas would be very sketchy. Every child having a part, and all gifts divided according to need, seemed the most logical thing to this girl from the parsonage.

"What! No presents for the kids who come?" The theater officer did a double-take. This was going too far, sticky seats or not. He mopped his brow.

"They won't come!" The wife from Kwajalein was emphatic.

But the idea caught on—fast. Military people are generous, and this they liked. Here was an outlet for their generosity.

AS THE DAY NEARED the PX was practically sold out of white wrappings. The commissary did a thriving extra business in special groceries. The Red Cross even set up a wrapping booth.

So Christmas came to the base, and

the children came to the party—all 2,000 of them.

Such a scene had never been known at the theater. An hour ahead of time the children lined up for each party. Each child had a white package, elaborately and imaginatively wrapped. The mothers circulated up and down the lines. The committees bustled about. The children laughed and screamed and waved their packages, but they stayed in line and waited for a party where they knew there would be no present for themselves!

Inside the theater a program of suitable moving pictures was given, then came the climax to the party.

THE CURTAIN was raised on a stage simply lighted with white tapers. "Here's the pay-off," said the theater officer, nervously. "No kid will sit through this sentimental stuff on Christmas."

"No Santa Claus! No nothin'," said a homesick young airman, who was handling the curtain. "Where I come

from Santa kisses all the kids and gives them a red sock. This don't look right!"

The chaplain stepped forward and in a few simple words told the Christmas story. A white-robed choir, procured by the Red Cross from a nearby college, entered with lighted candles, singing joyfully. While the theater officer stared, and the curtain man leaned on the wall for support, the children, marshalled by mothers and helpers filed down the aisles and quietly laid their gifts at the edge of the stage.

"All is calm, all is bright," sang the choir.

Four times was the theater filled and four times was this scene repeated.

THE CHAPLAIN was jubilant. He was not surprised. The Red Cross worker, accustomed to heart-interest stories, was misty-eyed.

The theater officer was limp.

Linda was calm. She had seen this happen since childhood.

Christmas in a Pioneer Parsonage

By RUTH STUMP

A bleak and disappointing holiday was followed by a celebration when the pastor's monthly check came

THE PARSONAGE WAS a ramshackle shell of a house in a windswept prairie town of North Dakota. Shrill winds whistled through its thin walls with only a sheet-metal stove and a kitchen range to combat them. The family who lived there knew few comforts, no luxuries.

The missionary had been terribly disappointed in the field to which he had been called. There was only a small

clapboard chapel with crude home-made benches for pews and a covered box for a pulpit. The wheezy old organ emitted squeaks and groans. His work was hard and trying, with only a handful of scattered people to form a congregation.

AND WHAT MUST the pioneer missionary's wife have felt? She was a dainty, cultured little lady with a fine family

background and a good education. She seemed too delicate a flower to have been transplanted from the cultivated East to that bare, rugged prairie in such a rigorous clime. She was too sensitive a soul to grapple with a pioneer missionary's problems.

She was constantly busy, scrupulously neat and clean, sewing a fine seam and cooking nourishing meals from frugal provisions for her husband and family of five children. She bore her poverty proudly and reared her children in the fear of the Lord, amid both scalding tears and gay laughter.

A great event in that pioneer parsonage was the visit of Dr. W. A. Passavant, who was then superintendent of home missions. He held one of the tiny daughters in his lap and she stroked his long white beard. "I brought something for your mama in that big telescope," he told her. "You lift the lid and see if you can find the package."

THE CHILD tugged it open and there lay a parcel. He asked her to hand it to her mother. She opened it and there, in gleaming folds, lay the material for a black silk dress. The mother fingered it lovingly and could scarcely speak her thanks.

"I have so longed for a silk dress," she

SOMETIMES WE FORGET that most of the churches where we worship now are the results of hard, sacrificial labor of pioneer American missionaries. This Christmas story describes the sacrifice in one parsonage, the home of the Rev. George Gerberding and his family, in the days when the first Lutheran congregations using the English language were being formed in the Northwest. Dr. Gerberding was later a famous teacher and leader of the church, and his sons and daughters are notable in the work of the church in this generation.

faltered through her tears. "I have not had one since I was married."

Beneath the folds of silk lay a block print Christmas panel wreathed in red holly. The words "Christmas and New Year's Greeting" stood out in bold print.

"That is for all of you," the man said. "I bought it on my last trip to Germany."

The panel is used to this day in one of the missionary's children's homes and ever remains a reminder of the thoughtfulness of the great philanthropist to a lone missionary's wife. She forgave him that night for sending her husband so far away from all that was dear to her "back East."

THAT CHRISTMAS the check from the mission board was delayed. The family was told that they could not have their Christmas celebration until it came. It hardly seemed fair that a huge basket of food was sent from the parsonage kitchen to a widow who did the family washing. The children plodded through the snow to deliver it. They found several well-filled baskets had preceded theirs to her door. Two fat turkeys graced her kitchen table.

When the children got home they found their mother crying over a couple of prairie chickens which someone had brought in for their Christmas feast. They had a wild, flat taste like the prairies that bred them. They had none of the "trimmings" that make them palatable. Yet eat them the family did, for there were no other delicacies for the Christmas dinner.

And no toys, no warm clothes, no Christmas tree, not even a Christ-child candle for the frozen-over window. Only snow and cold and a little group of people in the bare church singing "Silent Night, Holy Night." The missionary always asked them to sing it in German,



formed over their mouths—but even that was better than having noses and cheeks bitten by Jack Frost.

EACH CHILD was allowed to pick one toy from a box of broken and discarded remnants on sale. The toddler chose some alphabet blocks with several letters missing. The little boy selected an air ball that promptly burst when inflated. The little girl found a jumping jack. Disabled and disjointed though it was it caused much laughter in the parsonage and much tying and gluing by the mother's nimble fingers before it ceased to amuse. The older girls had gone alone to buy perfume and chocolate creams with their quarter apiece. The missionary bought his wife a white bow tie he wanted her to wear on her usually too-somber dresses.

On the way home he bought a frozen turkey and some limp celery. So the family feasted, after all, even though their celebration was two days late. Nothing could mar the joy of the festive occasion or its remembered happiness down through the years.

SOMETIMES, WHEN ONE of the descendants of this pioneer missionary enters the elaborately bedecked churches which have grown from pioneer effort, he is almost mystified. The expensive tinsel and glitter of the decorations shock him into the thought: "Christ was born in a stable. I wonder if he would like such a setting for his birthday?"

And then he thinks of the bare halls and little chapels where some outpost missionaries are still pioneering and which have little or no decoration in honor of the Christ-child.



Norwegian and English because all of those prairie pioneers did not know it in English. The chill of that first remembered Christmas still joins the thrill of many happier ones when the old hymn is sung.

THE DAY AFTER Christmas the monthly check from the mission board came. "Thank the Lord, now we can have our Christmas," shouted the missionary! He wrapped up his children in their warmest clothes, tucked the baby in big blankets on his soapbox sled, and up Broadway they trudged to buy their belated Christmas gifts. The shops were almost dismantled but they provided shoes for all the family, and warm wooly "comforters." They were scarfs two-and-a-half yards long that wound and wound around the skimpy coats like a mummy's wrapping. They were cumbersome, but kept out the icy blasts. Sometimes the children wound them around their heads and faces until only their eyes peeped out. Then they hated the sheet of ice which

MEMORIES OF A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

By FLORENCE DUNCAN LONG

The day we distributed gifts to needy children of a mission Sunday school was the happiest one of all

IF YOU WERE ASKED to describe the happiest Christmas you have ever spent, which one would you choose?

Throughout the years I have enjoyed many happy Christmas days, but I believe the one I am describing here will always remain in my heart as the richest, sweetest, and best of them all.

ALL DAY AND ALL NIGHT before Christmas the snow had been falling and the streets of our midwest city were covered with a beautiful, sparkling white carpet. The sun was shining brightly as we left home on Christmas morning, creating a fairyland in a familiar, humdrum neighborhood. The air was crisp and exhilarating, as it should be, for a perfect Christmas day.

My friend Shelda and I were interested in a small mission Sunday school in a neglected section of our city. A large downtown church had given us chairs and songbooks, and every Sunday afternoon a group of us conducted classes for children of the neighborhood.

These children knew real hardship, and often did not have sufficient food. Their homes were drab and sordid, their lives filled with insecurity, but they seemed happy and carefree.

Our work there had been a rewarding experience, for the loving response of the children more than compensated for the effort we made.

We knew their Christmas would be scant. So early on Christmas morning



we started out with well-filled baskets. There were dolls, toys, books, games and candy, much of it given by our friends, all of it sure to be welcome.

THERE WAS A GIFT for Nancy, the pretty little Italian girl whose soft brown eyes were so appealing, and who was especially appreciative. Also for "Corinthian," the little colored girl who wore a patch over one eye, and for the others whose names I do not now remember. Where are they now, I wonder, and do they remember any of the songs and verses we tried to teach them?

They were so delighted with their gifts that it warmed our hearts. Our only regret was that we did not have more to give.

We started home with empty baskets and glowing hearts. It seemed to us that we were fortunate to have this opportunity to brighten Christmas Day for these little folks. We *knew* that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."



A Little Girl's Prayer Was Answered

By EDWARD STAUDERMAN

**The uninvited guest at the Christmas dinner was
really the person who had been asked to come**

FREQUENTLY CHRISTIAN people say a prayer and then give it no further thought. It's merely a matter of form. They expect nothing to happen, and that is exactly what happens—nothing!

It was like that with the Smith family. John Smith was a successful and respected businessman. He and his wife Mary had two children. May was ten, Johnny was five.

On Christmas Day, the morning was cold, windy and snowy. They had been romping about in the living room of their comfortable home, playing with

the children's toys and games until noon. Then dinner was ready. The roast ham and all that goes with it was on the table. All were standing at their customary places.

IT WAS MAY'S TURN to say the prayer. She folded her hands reverently. The others did likewise as she prayed "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let this food by thee be blessed. Amen."

"Amen" said they all. There was a shuffling of chairs as they took their places, ready for things to happen.

Dad held the big carving knife in one hand and the sharpening steel in the other. He gave the knife blade a few strokes to make a keen edge, as he had seen the butcher do at the market. Then he plunged the big fork into the ham and held the knife ready to cut a slice.

AT THAT MOMENT there was a sound at the front door. "What was that?" he asked.

"It sounded like our door bell," answered Mother. "I'll go see who it is."

"Who would be coming now?" Dad grumbled. "Why must we be disturbed even on a Christmas Day?"

They heard a low voice, but could not recognize it. "Who is it?" Dad shouted.

Mother came back into the dining room. "There is a poor man here," she said. "He wants something to eat."

"Send him around to the back door," said the father. "I'll make a sandwich for him."

"Why should he go to the back door?" asked Mother. "He is already in the house."

IN THE LIVING ROOM stood an elderly man, shabbily dressed, but clean and neat and quite dignified in his attitude. "I am so sorry to disturb you," he said. "Please give me a sandwich and I will be on my way."

Little May had bounced up from her chair. She got a plate, knife and fork, pulled up another chair and said, "Daddy, he can sit right here next to me. There's room for him."

Both parents were somewhat embarrassed. The old man again protested "No, no, thank you." But nothing could be done about it. He joined the family around the table, was given a full portion and ate silently like a very hungry man.

May whispered to her mother, "If he

had white whiskers he would look like Santa Claus." The old man heard the child's remark and smiled kindly.

WHEN HE HAD FINISHED his food he said, "Thank you all so much for your kindness. It brought back memories of my boyhood home and a beautiful story my mother once told me about the Christmas tree. Would you like to hear it?"

The children nodded eagerly.

"When the Christ-child was born and lay in the manger," the old man began, "all the trees came to bow and worship reverently. The apple tree came and brought bright, red apples. The maple tree brought its leaves of red and gold. And so came all the trees.

"Then came the poor little fir tree. It had no fruit to offer and did not even have leaves. But it came to offer itself. The Christ-child was so pleased with the modest little tree that he smiled and said, 'You shall be my birthday tree.'

"WHEN THE ANGELS in heaven heard this, they danced for joy and one of them flew down to perch on the very top of the little tree. And the stars in the sky, when they heard it, sang together. Dropping down like snowflakes, they clung to every twig and branch. That is why we have an angel at the top, and bright lights all over our Christmas tree. Then came the wise kings from the East. They brought gifts of gold and silver to remind us that God gave Jesus, the Saviour, to the world. And so we give Christmas gifts, too, that we may not forget.

"Now this little fir tree had a cross on every branch as a symbol of the cross of Jesus. It was brought down to us from a far-away beautiful land of deep, clean snow. And so Jesus came down to us from the beautiful home in heaven. The Christmas tree goes into every home



children voiced their appreciation.

Then Dad said, "Your clothing is very thin for this cold weather. I have an old overcoat here which I don't need. It is a good, warm coat." As he spoke he put the coat over the old man's shoulders. The man wiped tears of gratitude from his cheeks as he said, "God bless you" over and over. Then he opened the door. There was a cold blast as some snowflakes blew into the room. Then the door was shut and he was gone.

The family stood silently looking at the place where he had been. Then May said, "That was just like the prayer that I said—'Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.' He really came!"

"What's that?" said Dad, coming out of his reverie. "Why, little girl, I think you've got something there."

"You think!" exclaimed Mother. "Why, there is no doubt about it at all. Didn't Jesus say, 'I was hungry and you gave me food. I was cold and you clothed me' or words to that effect? And when they asked him 'When did we see you and help you?' he answered, 'Whatever you did to the least of these you did to me!'"

And in this way the little girl's Christmas prayer was really answered.



FOUR-YEAR-OLD'S PRAYER

COUSIN EMMIE was paying us a visit and I liked her a lot, better than any visitor we had ever had. When I said my prayers, I asked God to make her a Republican and a Lutheran. Uncle Harry was standing there in my room, and he laughed at my prayer. Mother didn't laugh and she didn't scold; but she stopped me as I was jumping in bed and made me stand by her side.

"Why did you pray that God would make Cousin Emmie a Republican and a Lutheran?" she asked me soberly. Her voice was soft, but I could see she wasn't exactly pleased.

"'Cause she's my very favorite cousin," I told her, "and I want her to go to heaven."

—FRANCES JOPLIN

A GOOSE FOR CHRISTMAS

By THEODORE J. KLEINHANS

**It looked like a slim holiday for Andre's family
until the butcher's wife looked out of the window**

A STRAY SNOWFLAKE drifted against the pan of burning charcoal. The steam lost itself in the waves of heated air that pushed up into the dusk and warded off the falling snow. Andre Girard stirred the chestnuts in the pan. From time to time one of the nuts would pop and send out an appetizing cloud.

The air was chill. Andre warmed his tiny fingers over the coals. Burning there in an outsize tin that he himself had cut, they cast a ruddy glow over his features. Across the square was the shop of the butcher. Now and then a customer threw his shadow across the doorway.

ANDRE STARED fixedly at the fat geese which still hung in the window. The lights inside outlined them in the growing dusk. Back in their dark flat along the banks of the Rhone, his mother and sister would have no goose for Christmas. Andre envied the shoppers across the street. Unlike his, theirs would be a happy *fete de Noel*.

When school had let out two days before, Andre had hoped to earn enough extra money to make the family Christmas a merry one. With luck, he might have been able to buy even a goose. At the very least he had hoped for a chicken. But man and elements had conspired against him.

The leaden skies had been sifting snow steadily. In bad weather, last-minute shoppers had no time for chestnuts. His "*Chataignes—tout chaud*" echoed fruitlessly across the square. And the bruises

and patches on his face reflected more serious troubles.

The afternoon before, a gang of young ruffians had pounced on him and driven him back with sticks and catcalls. Worst of all, they had dumped three kilos of nuts into the fire, dancing and gloating over the flames. The young hoodlums scattered only when a policeman walked into the square. He pulled Andre from the gutter, his face cut and bleeding, only in time for the lad to see the last of the nuts shrivel in the fire.

THE MORE ANDRE stared at the *boucherie* geese, the more his mouth watered. He knew it was wrong to steal. Yet he weighed the chances. A brick thrown through the window, a snatch at the bird, a quick dash through the winding lanes of the Old Town. With luck he could make it. Was it worth the risk? But the pungent odor of burning chestnuts stung his nostrils.

His fingers leaped to the pan. In his dreaming he had scorched the nuts. Five or six of them were hopeless. He threw them into the fire. The rest he scraped with his knife.

Meanwhile the six o'clock bells chimed down from the towers of St. Pierre. They paused after giving the time, then burst into a medley of carols. Listening, Andre could not help but wonder what sort of Christmas sermons John Calvin and John Knox had preached there 400 years before. Had they had a goose for Christmas?



ANDRE SHIVERED. Le Schah, his tiny pup, chewed at Andre's cuff. The cold air tickled his ankle. The pup was nearly white with snow, though the brown coat still shone from underneath. Like Andre's, his breath puffed out in bursts of white vapor.

The lamps round the square snapped on. In the falling snow they shed little light. Across the street the butcher came out and rolled down the wooden blind of the window, locking the geese safe inside. The window on the second floor swung open. A woman leaned out. "Jean," she called, "see if the boy has some chestnuts. I forgot to get some for the stuffing, and all the stores will be closing."

The butcher did as he was bid. "What

about it, lad?" he asked. "Sold all your chestnuts?"

"THERE'S STILL a few that's not cooked, sir. I'd be pleased to let you have them." The boy pulled the cotton sack from his shoulder. It hung nearly empty. "There's only about a kilo left, sir. Say, one franc twenty."

"On Christmas Eve, two francs," said the butcher. He took the sack and disappeared in the doorway. He carried the bag so that the pencilled name of Andre Girard was uppermost.

Meanwhile Andre whistled eagerly to Le Schah. With two francs in his pocket, at least he could buy some chocolates. The pup cuddled close, growing colder and colder in the snow. The butcher

reappeared in the doorway.

"Here you are, lad," he said, handing him a two-franc piece. "And *joyeux Noel!*"

"Thanks a thousand, monsieur, and *joyeux Noel a vous!*"

THE BUTCHER swung the sack over the boy's shoulder. It was definitely not empty. Andre grabbed it. His eyes spread wider and wider. He reached in and tore open the wrapping. A goose for Christmas! The boy jumped up and down in the snow. He showed it to the pup. He smiled from ear to ear. In the doorway the butcher and his wife stood watching.

Suddenly the boy turned grave. He looked up at the butcher. "I . . . I . . . my mother . . . I can't take anything for nothing, sir," he stammered. "You'll have to take it back!" There was a tear in his eye and a catch in his voice.

"Come, Andre," said the butcher. "We read all about you and those ruffians in the *Journal de Geneve*. My wife recognized your name there on the sack. And let's not call the goose a gift. Let's make it a loan, eh? You come in Friday and deliver meat for me. That'll make us even."

"Can I? Can I really?" The boy's eyes were dancing again. He hugged the goose to his breast and capered in the snow.

The butcher reached into his apron and tossed a scrap of meat to the dog. Schah gobbled it up. His tail wagged furiously in the snow and fanned a bare spot on the sidewalk.

Andre Girard was already ten meters down the street. "*Allons-y, Schah!*" he called. "*Joyeux Noel* to the whole world! Come on, Schah!"

Children Chatted about Christmas

By PHYLLIS G. BRANDT

Timmy decided he'd be willing to give Jesus his trains because it was the best gift he could offer

BUNDLED UP LIKE Eskimos, Timothy and Peter had difficulty walking through the snow. The wind brought a healthy glow to their cheeks and the breath from their chapped lips almost froze in the air. Timmy, two years younger than Peter, watched his brother's technique, then bravely shuffled through the deepest part of the snowbank, almost burying his body in it. They laughed heartily together. There was a reason for such gayety in their little hearts—the memory of Christmas was still fresh.

Although the storm had ended, a few snowflakes still twisted and turned in the winter wind. In the distance a church bell sounded loudly throughout the community.

"Hurry up," Peter commanded, "we'll really be late this time."

"Can't hurry," puffed Timmy, "I'll fall down."

"GIVE ME YOUR HAND!" He reached blindly in back of him and together they trod to the road where the cars had



packed the snow solidly to the ground. Side by side they followed the tire tracks, cautiously watching for oncoming cars.

Peter hastily pulled the woolen scarf about his brother's chin and they continued their hike in silence. Then, "Peter."

"Keep the scarf up," Peter insisted.

"I can't talk then," his brother replied, a little disturbed.

"What do you want?"

"Is Christmas really Jesus' birthday?"

"Sure."

"Well, how old is Jesus?" the younger inquired.

Peter shrugged his shoulders, "Pretty old, I guess."

"IF I WAS JESUS, I wouldn't like to have my birthday come on Christmas."

Pete's face twisted in a puzzled look, "Why?"

"'Cause you couldn't tell which were your birthday presents and which were your Christmas presents" came the reply.

"You're all mixed up," his brother disgustedly replied, "There wasn't any Christmas until Jesus was born—that's why we have it."

"Peter—did Jesus get Christmas presents, too?"

"Sure, he got better presents than anybody in the world—"

"Even than kings?"

"He got presents from kings."

Timmy seemed satisfied. "I wish I was borned when Jesus was a baby—I would give him something."

"What would you give him?"

There was a brief silence, "Maybe my rocking horse." His face brightened.

"But that's old and shabby. You couldn't give him that!"

TIMMY BECAME short of breath, stumbled and picked himself up again. They brushed the snow from his snowpants.

"Why?"

"You would have to give him your 'lectric train—that would be more like it."

Horror focused in the youngster's eyes. "No, I wouldn't give him my train—he could have all my toys, but not my train."

"If you want to give Jesus something you have to make it the best thing you have 'cause he's God. If you love him enough you won't give him anything you don't want 'cause then it isn't worth anything anyway."

His younger brother thought a moment. Even at his tender age, he suddenly began to sense the meaning of sacrifice.

"Sure," he confessed hesitatingly, "I—I would give him my train," and then as an afterthought, "but I bet he wouldn't keep it. He'd give it right back 'cause he'd know how much I liked it."

"Yeah, I guess he's like that. Come on, let's run."

THE SUPERINTENDENT opened the door and they stamped the snow from their boots. Inside the songs of young children echoed through the halls and their voices, clear, eager and unspoiled, mingled with the soft music of a piano.

They hurriedly hung their coats on hangers and tiptoed into class. Timmy's wide brown eyes found the picture of Christ in the manger and somehow he felt a little closer to his God this early morning in Sunday school.



Agnes and the Christmas Spirit

By JEAN CHRISTISON

The gift a lonely little girl wanted most was the end of a neighborhood feud so she could come to the party

THE CHURCH HALL, gaily decorated for Christmas, was crowded with parents. Excited pupils sat in front rows, but one face was missing. It belonged to my favorite pupil, Agnes Elmira Smith. I had singled her out as an only child like myself, poor and yet eager for life.

At Christmas the other teacher in the two-room rural school and I gave a party for the children. For many of them, we knew, this was to be their only touch of the season's spirit. The farming community was remote and poverty-stricken; in winter there was no produce to sell. There was no money to waste on needless festivity.

THAT MORNING, as school broke up for the vacation, I had come upon six-year-old Agnes crying in the hall. "Cheer up!" I said. "Have you forgotten that

this is the night of the Christmas tree? Santa will be at the church hall with candy and nuts."

"That's it, Miss," she sobbed. "I ain't coming."

"But Agnes, Mr. Grovil who lives next door to you will be bringing his sleigh full of children tonight. Jackie and Betty will be coming for sure.

"I wonder if it isn't about time you patched your differences with them," I suggested softly. "Don't give up. See if you can't manage to come."

In the hall it was just time for Santa to make his entrance. Then I saw Agnes at the end of the front row. To my surprise, she was sitting hand in hand with little Betty Grovil. We heard the approaching tinkle of sleigh bells and Santa, appearing in the window, jumped down

jingling to the platform. The children's faces were like lighted lanterns.

LATER AS AGNES sat happily hugging her doll and smiling, I went up to her. "So you managed to get here after all," I smiled.

"Do you know what, Miss? I told my dad he could give me some little friends for Christmas anyway, even if he

couldn't give me any presents or have a chimney for Santa to come down. So he didn't say nothing for awhile and then he went over and shook hands with Mr. Grovil and now we aren't bad friends no more and Betty and me can play together."

I felt a warm glow. Was this perhaps the true spirit of Christmas?



Do You Love Yourself More Than Me?

By KATHERINE BENION

IT WAS SATURDAY EVENING and we'd had one of those extremely busy weeks. Each night we had planned to sit down and attend to some necessary business. We had decided also to make a complete advance Christmas list and thereby avoid the haphazard shopping we had been doing for several years, always to find in the end that someone had not been included.

Consequently about seven o'clock my husband looked at five-year-old Bobby as he lay on the floor completely absorbed in his books and said, "Bobby, I want you to go to bed early tonight. Mother and I haven't had any time together this week."

Concern came into Bobby's face. "But Daddy, do you and mother love yourselves more than me?" he asked.

The question obviously surprised

Daddy and he pondered its full meaning. Then he explained just what we had to do and Bobby contentedly went to bed.

As we went over family expenses—insurance, grocery, house and car repairs, gas, telephone, lights—and after that began the Christmas lists, Bobby's remark took on new significance to me. Undoubtedly the fact that Christmas was everywhere in the air made me more aware of all the things we do in which we give God no real part. That week I had observed shopping crowds, radio programs, news articles, hurried activity, group meetings. All were very normal activities but now I looked at them with a new thought uppermost in my mind. How often in the course of each of those days our Lord had cause to ask us that same question—"Do you love yourselves more than me?"



FIVE MAKE A FAMILY



CHRISTMAS CAROLS

TRAFFIC WAS SIMPLY crawling down Main Street as I edged my way into the solid stream of cars. It was the sort of procession which brings irritable honkings most days of the year.

"Lots of people," remarked Karen, from the rear seat.

"Too many," said Pete. "There won't be anything left."

"Yes, there will. We'll just have to push."

Susie looked distressed. "I can't push. They all push me."

"Bite 'em," advised Pete. "Or kick."

"Peter Melton!" I risked turning my attention from my driving a moment. "What kind of Christmas spirit is that?" I laughed around at him and the people in the car creeping slowly past in the opposite direction thought I was speaking to them. They smiled and nodded.

THE PARKING LOT was packed tight. A woman studying a list almost walked into my fender. Two boys wheeling a wire cart loaded to the danger point threaded their way in and out between cars. A small boy, younger even than Susie, was pulling candy canes out of a paper sack, to the dismay of his mother who could do nothing but protest, since she needed both arms to hold her huge bag of groceries. A ruddy-faced man brushed past, a tree over his shoulder. He passed so close that the ends of the branches pushed through my window which I had lowered to make navigating easier. "Sorry," he called, and, when I smiled in reply, "Merry Christmas!"

At least that's what it looked like. I couldn't hear for the "Silent Night" which was blaring over the loudspeaker.

JUST AS IT LOOKED as though I'd have to try circling the block once more, a man paused at my window to say, "Hold it, Miss. I'm going right out." He made his way to a car ahead of me and I sat there glowing at being called "miss." I'll never know whether he thought I looked it or whether that was a kind of Christmas gift.

"Well, look who's here," sang out a feminine voice. In the car next to me sat Eloise Clinefoos with Weesie half hidden behind a huge wreath.

"Hi, there!" In the Christmas glow of my heart, I was glad to see her. "Going or coming?"

"Going. We came down early. I always think I've bought everything there is to buy, then find myself at it again on Christmas Eve. It happens every year."

I silenced the nasty little voice that whispered Eloise must have the spirit of the season if she could admit her shortcomings. "Why can't the Devil let me alone at this time of year at least? 'That's part of the fun, isn't it?' We were both shouting above the roar of the music.

SHE PULLED OUT and I gathered my brood under my wings for last-minute briefing about taking hands and not getting separated in the crowd and staying put if you do.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem,"

boomed in our ears as we pushed through the doors of the five and ten, but once inside we were invited to "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

"Paper napkins this way!" and Karen with Susie in tow sailed down the far aisle.

"Come on, Mommy—there they go," Pete urged me along. We zoomed so fast we almost knock into Mrs. Schmidt who was looking earnestly at a Santa Claus falseface. At sight of us, she put it down hastily. Poor dear! Even Susie has discovered that the church Santa is Mr. Schmidt, "because he wears Mr. Schmidt's shoes." Children notice things you'd never dream would interest them. I'm sure I haven't the faintest idea what sort of shoes Mr. Schmidt wears.

"Merry Christmas," she beamed. "I was just thinking of all the Meltons. I've just come from the church and it looks beautiful. The decorations are all simple but lovely this year. As you stand at the rear door the poinsettias just march down the windows to the trees and Mabel has massed cut poinsettias in the altar vases and the whole thing just makes the cross stand out gleaming gold.

"And Connie, the poinsettia you sent is one of the most beautiful I've ever seen. I wondered whether you had any favorite person to whom you'd like it to go after the service?"

"Why, no, I don't think so. I'd just like it to go to one of our members who can't be there. Isn't that right, Pete?"

HE NODDED, pulling meaningfully in the direction Karen and Susie had gone. Apparently Mrs. Schmidt didn't notice his impatience. She smiled at him. "So mother lets you decide things for the family?"

"He helped save the money for it," I explained. "He should have some say-

so, don't you think? And now we must catch up with the rest of our family."

"She's nice," announced Pete as we hurried on. And I agreed heartily. Meeting her had added to the day's brightness.

By the time we caught up with Karen and Susie, the strains of "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" hung over the store like a ceiling. But it was a nice high ceiling like frosty stars on a winter night.

KAREN HAD EVERYTHING picked out. "Hurry with the money and I'll get waited on." It looked as though she were being a trifle optimistic, but sure enough, she managed to stick her hand with the purchase and the cash under the salesgirl's nose at just the proper moment.

"Now where?" demanded Susie.

"Tree lights," said Pete.

"You lead the way. You're smaller." Karen seems to have things down to a science.

So with Pete leading we squirmed our way, snake-style, to the next counter. There was a friendly holiday air about the crowd. One woman dropped a whole armful of packages and eager hands helped her reassemble them.

When our errands were attended to we stepped out into the refreshing winter air. "Brr!" Pete pulled down his ear muffs.

Above our heads the loudspeaker was sending forth "Away in a Manger." Susie began to sing. Then Pete, kidding at first then liking the sound, joined in. People smiled kindly as they hurried by.

"Mother! Make them stop! Everybody is looking!" Karen was disgusted.

"But everybody is smiling. There is a man who has an expression just like Santa Claus."

Karen giggled and took my hand. Ahead of us Pete and Susie sang on. Yes, Christmas is just around the corner.

Personal Problem Clinic

Another triangle

QUESTION: My husband and I are having increasingly serious troubles. We have always had some arguments, especially about money. But he is always displeased about something, from my trip to visit my mother in California to the church work I have been doing. I have given up two clubs for him and have stopped part-time work because he objected. He gets angry about things my friends say, and he does not like my local relatives. We hardly ever visit relatives or friends any more because of the unpleasant results, and for the same reason we rarely have anyone visit us. Bob seems to stay away from home just as much as possible.

Some time ago I learned that he is gambling at the shore (20 miles away) and only a few days ago I found that he has been spending considerable time with another woman. I have talked to him about these things and have received promises, but his promises generally do not hold very long. He seems to be looking for things to hold against me, while I have been trying to be a Christian and a good mother to our eight-year-old daughter. What is the way out?

REPLY: Your great need is to discover what is the real cause of your husband's attitudes and practices. That would enable you to work more intelligently toward a solution. When did the strain in relations begin, and what touched it off? Is there anything in your life and ways which could be the source? Does he like your cooking, housekeeping, attitudes toward his family, or attitudes toward his work? Has your intimate life been mutually satisfactory? What are your money troubles? Do you keep up your appearance so that you are attractive to him?

If you find one or more trouble-making causes in your own life, have a quiet, pleasant talk with your husband, and assure him that you want to make things

right. Ask his help to that end. Allow no unpleasantness to creep in—argument only makes troubles worse.

If you find no particular trouble-maker in your life, make a date with him to go out for dinner, or have a special occasion at home, and in that different atmosphere ask him to tell you what you can do to make your marriage and home life what it ought to be and can be. Make yourself as attractive as possible in appearance and manner, and go out of your way to do extra kindnesses (though he may not deserve them). Accept gladly any co-operation he is willing to give.

He deserves to have some good straight talk from some other man, but it is a question whether that would solve the problem. It may be better to have a few persons of high repute talk to him tactfully about his disloyalty and point out the kind of home life he could have.

Try out these suggestions. If, over a reasonable period of time, they do not yield results, get in touch with the counselor whose name I am giving you by mail.

Common sense?

QUESTION: A friend of mine, who has great confidence in his own opinions, remarked that psychology is nothing more than common sense. I should like your judgment on this.

REPLY: Psychology is a science, and its conclusions are reached by means of experimental and clinical methods. Common sense for any individual is the outcome of his total experiences and his capacity for reasoning. These items vary from person to person and from one place to another, so common sense says different things under different conditions. Some common sense conclusions correspond to those of experimental science whereas others fall far short.

Common sense needs considerable checking.

—EARL S. RUDISILL

Optimistic About Business

Social Responsibilities of the Businessman. By Harold R. Bowen, with foreword by Charles P. Taft and commentary by F. Ernest Johnson. Harper. 276 pages. \$3.50.

This readable volume is the result of research financed, at least in part, by the Rockefeller Foundation and encouraged by the Department of The Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches. However, as Mr. Taft points out in his brief foreword, the National Council has taken no position, nor assumed any responsibility, as regards any of its contents.

To businessmen and laymen alike who are concerned with the social aspects of economic life, this study is to be recommended as a most practical and convenient aid. It is not a polemic to support a thesis, but a calm review of the present economic scene, a statement of the issues, of the arguments pro and con, an appraisal of social gains against the standards not so much of the author as of the community, and an analysis of proposals for further advancement.

Dr. Bowen proceeds, as he says in his preface, "from the assumption that the several hundred largest business firms are vital centers of power and decision . . ." and, throughout, his book is almost limited to the motives, the mores, the morals and the other phases of business life reflective of the degree of social responsibility prevalent among these large concerns. This level of industry is, to be sure, easier to study than small business, for its activities are more adequately documented and it is more articulate of its social views. Moreover, as Dr. Bowen points out, "With increasing tendencies toward price leadership and wage leadership among a few large companies and a few large labor unions, special responsibility for leadership in the development of principles falls upon a fairly small number of businessmen and labor leaders."

The author's findings are for the most part optimistic, and, in so far as his personal views show through, it would be fair to assume that he expects that further gains in the recognition of the businessman's social responsibility will come slowly, and without any more radical change in our system than a broader representation of

labor, consumers, and other affected groups in the councils of business decision, and a fuller appreciation of the application of ethical principles to many specific business techniques and practices such as unnecessary model changes, overwhelming customers (particularly purchasing agents) with false kindness, the excessive physical strain of executive aggressiveness, sex in sales promotion, and many others.

The book is unique for its 27 well-written closing pages. They are a commentary by Dr. F. Ernest Johnson who refers to them as a "Christian critique," of Dr. Bowen's book, and they are optimistic too. Dr. Johnson says that "man is not condemned to be dominated by his desire either for possessions or for power," and he closes on the note that "The most effective corrective influence is self-criticism, not that which comes from without. There is ratifying evidence that more and more Christian businessmen are engaged in this wholesome activity."

H. OBER HESS

Philadelphia

Keeping Calm

Tensions and Destiny. By John M. Ellison. John Knox Press. 136 pages. \$2.

The author states in his preface his intention to face and analyze tension and to point out its problems. Humbly he seeks to present a Christian solution. For while tensions indicate the world is very much alive there is a need for guidance to accept these tensions as a *discipline* and to resolve them in terms of ethical principles and the mandates of spiritual religion.

Dr. Ellison is a Negro educator, professor of social studies before becoming president of Virginia Union University. His is a voice of conviction from a life that represents those who suffer and struggle in the unending battle to overcome tension—and who discover compensatory meaning in their experiences. Here is a dignified and sane plea for positive Christian living based upon Christ as our destiny, and the practical application of loving our fellowmen as we love God.

The book includes 11 sermons and one essay with such subjects as: "Lessons from Life's Margins," "Watchman, What of the Night?" "Reversing the Wheels of Fate," "Mounting Up as with Eagles' Wings." Dr. Ellison quotes widely from other writings, much of it from the little known but rich heritage of his own people. The approach and illustrations reflect a college atmosphere indicating these messages may have been addressed originally to the Negro students who must face ugly facts without flinching and who must find elements of promise even in difficult situations.

Passages of Scripture form the basis for each message and appropriate prayers close each sermon. There is a full list of references and acknowledgments.

Atlanta

PAUL J. RENZ

Frustration in China

The Lost Churches of China. By Leonard M. Outerbridge. Westminster Press. 237 pages. \$3.50.

Leonard Outerbridge has made a most significant analysis of what has been happening to Christian missionaries in China. Beginning with the first missionary invasion of China by Nestorian Christians in A.D. 635, Outerbridge discusses the many attempts to make China Christian. These attempts have realized questionable results and, whether sponsored by Nestorian, Roman Catholic, or Protestant Christians, have encountered tragic frustrations, including the expulsion of Christian missionaries five times in the last 1,300 years—the fifth time, in our own era, finds communism liquidating

our missionaries and occupying our property.

"Thus it becomes an issue of immediate importance that the church recognize its blunders, abandon its errors, and prepare itself to grasp the opportunity in the present crisis to seek and save that which was lost."

Why has the church blundered in China? What are its blunders? Outerbridge states that (1) the church "has repeatedly employed political forces to gain its ends." (2) The Chinese Church has been lost "because it was so largely dependent upon the Western Church which first lost its way" and "Christianity in China has been too basically engaged doing God's work in the ways the church has thought best, trying to hurry the kind of Kingdom that Jesus did not advocate."

While reading the book you ought to keep a constant check on your political temperament, because you will find sentences like this: "Before the Western Democracies can expect to be heeded in China, they must show sufficient humility to renounce their betrayal of China at Yalta."

This book is disturbing and provocative. It asks important questions. It gives pertinent answers. This is a *must* book for thoughtful Christians.

Pottstown, Pa. EUGENE B. UMBERGER

What I Saw in Europe. By Victoria Booth Demarest. Vantage Press. 160 pages. \$2.75.

The granddaughter of the founder of the Salvation Army, General William Booth, proves herself to be a skilled observer of church life and general social conditions in Europe. She covered most of western Europe in the summer of 1951, and describes her journey with much personal detail, much deep perception.

The Imitation of Christ. By Thomas a Kempis. Pocket Books. 305 pages. 35c.

The five-century-old masterpiece of devotional writing appeared last month as a beautifully printed "Pocket Book" at 35 cents. The volume has clear type, good arrangement, and some strong two-color line drawings.



ZION CHURCH (Canton, Ohio) Treasurer James Hutter receives check for \$11,909.27 from Joseph Hilton (right) administrator for the estate of the late Caroline Lengel as Pastor Tom Tomrighausen (center) looks on. Check was largest gift ever received by Zion and came as a result of Mrs. Lengel's conviction that by leaving her entire estate to her church, she would be rendering a real stewardship and putting her earthly goods to the "best possible use"

KANSAS:

Churches Increasing Subscription Lists

WICHITA—The committee on synodical plan for THE LUTHERAN, headed by Dr. T. Benton Peery, has been working hard to exceed the results of last year. The first report shows that synod is increasing its subscription list each year. More churches are entering the 100 per cent for members paid from church treasury. CONGREGATIONS have responded liberally to the Lutheran appeal by both foodstuffs and cash for aid to people overseas. Also a number of congregations responded to the Thanksgiving appeal for clothing to Lutheran World Relief.

THE HOME MISSIONS regional committee of National Lutheran Council churches will meet Jan. 25 at Kansas City, Mo.

THIRTEEN STUDENTS from synod are enrolled in Midland College.

THE REV. DAVID M. FUNK reports that Trinity Church, Sedalia, Mo., received 45 new members since June 15. New members were feted at a dinner meeting recently. This spirit of evangelism is bringing renewed life and vigor to this old congregation.

ZION CHURCH, Hutchinson, is celebrating its 65th anniversary in December. Speakers include two former pastors—Dr. Alfred J. Beil, president of the Iowa Synod, and the Rev. Eugene Harrison, Council Bluffs, Iowa. The Rev. George L. Search, Hays, son of the congregation, and the Rev. Walter H. Moeller, Salina, will also have a part on the program.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, Salina, celebrated its 80th anniversary recently with four services sponsored by auxiliary organizations. On Youth Night a Life Service plaque was dedicated bearing the names of the sons of the congregation in the ministry. They are:

KANSAS . . .

James J. Raun, Alfred J. Beil, Paul Close and Olney E. Eaton. New pews and a public address system, given as memorials, were dedicated. The Rev. Walter H. Moeller is pastor.

REFORMATION CHURCH, Wichita, has prepared plans for a larger building. The congregation is moving from the East Side YMCA to the new Curtis Intermediate School, Edgemoor and Lincoln, Jan. 3.

T. BENTON PEERY

NEW JERSEY:

Students Attend Trenton Workshop

TRENTON—Students from colleges and universities throughout New Jersey attended a two-day workshop on church vocations for women, sponsored by the ULCA Board of Education under the direction of Dr. Mildred E. Winston, at St. Bartholomew's Church, Trenton, Nov. 21-22. The conference was designed to recruit professionally trained young women for church work. Leading Lutheran women in the fields of education, counseling, nursing, journalism, religious education and social work, presented the various aspects of Christian service.

The educational phase was presented by Miss Heimtraut Dietrich, dean of women at Wagner College; Miss Margaret Miller, educator in literacy programs in Liberia; Miss Helen Shirk, kindergarten teacher in Japan; Miss Ruth Slifer, elementary teacher in India and Sister Catherine Stirewalt, instructor in the Deaconess School, Ruxton, Maryland.

Counseling groups were led by Miss Josephine Darmstaetter of the WMS of the ULCA; journalism was discussed by Miss Betty Edwards of the same organization.

Sister Louise Burroughs, director of nurses at the Lankenau Hospital, Philadelphia, spoke about nursing.

Religious education was outlined by Mrs.

Herman Hammer, missionary from Argentina; Miss Hazel Loudy, student at Gettysburg Seminary; and Mrs. Kenneth Rystrom, member of the WMS of Holy Trinity Church, East Orange.

Mrs. Julie Matzinger, social worker with the Lutheran Welfare Association of New Jersey, Jersey City, discussed social work.

OFFICERS of the synodical Luther League were given special indoctrination at a retreat held at Holy Communion Church, Berlin, recently. Missions, Christian vocation, recreation, social action, evangelism and public relations were discussed under the leadership of Richard T. Sutcliffe of THE LUTHERAN staff and the Rev. Earl W. Feight, Jr., state pastoral advisor.

MISS RUTH SLIFER, missionary on furlough from India, spoke at the annual Thank Offering service held in St. Paul's Church, Linden.

THE NEW St. Paul's Church in Teaneck has the unique distinction of being the tallest building in the community. It is the third building occupied by the rapid-growing congregation within the past 27 years.

The new building is of American colonial design and seats 500. It cost \$200,000 with 70 per cent of the funds being secured by two financial appeals during the past decade. Dr. Edwin H. Knudten conducted the dedicatory service Nov. 29.

RALPH I. SHOCKEY

NEW YORK:

Program Planned at Conference Workshop

SYRACUSE—A new venture in conference procedure was started on Oct. 17, when a workshop was held in St. John and St. Peter's Church, Syracuse. Conference officers and committee chairmen met for an all-day session to plan the year's work and to co-ordinate all endeavors of the committees under the leadership of conference president, the Rev. Norbert H. Stracker, Jr. Dr. Frederick

Knubel presented an overall picture of the work of the synod.

The United Lutheran Laymen—Syracuse District met in Luther Memorial Church, North Syracuse, on Nov. 12. Dr. Frank H. Thimer, First English Church, Syracuse, gave the address. The following were elected: President Russell L. Krapf, Zion's, Syracuse; vice president, James M. Lawrence, Atonement, Syracuse; secretary, Karl Schneider, Immanuel, Clay; and treasurer, Arthur F. Paschke, St. Paul's, Oswego.

ST. JOHN AND ST. PETER'S CHURCH, the mother church of Lutheranism in Syracuse, celebrated its 115th anniversary with special services. Dr. Frederick R. Knubel, president of the synod, and Dr. David Jaxheimer, assistant to the president, were speakers. The Rev. Nels Bergstrom of the National Lutheran Council staff described the Christian approach to the Jews. Eight full-time workers in the church have come from this congregation; six in the ministry, one in the diaconate and one a parish worker.

AT HOLY NATIVITY CHURCH, Endicott, a new parsonage was dedicated Nov. 8. Pastor Paul J. Tritschler was assisted in the act of dedication by Dr. David G. Jaxheimer. The 25th anniversary of Pastor Tritschler's ordination was celebrated by a surprise dinner. Speaker was the Rev. William T. Leil, pastor of Christ Church, Little Neck.

PASTOR MELVIN E. YEARKE, Johnson City, spoke on "The Inner Reformation" at the service at Prince of Peace Church . . . DR. PAUL C. WHITE showed pictures taken on his South American trip last summer at the unity dinner of the Southern Tier District Luther League held at Ascension Church on Nov. 8 . . . The Lutheran Church at ITHACA celebrated its 40th anniversary.

THE LEADERSHIP TRAINING SCHOOL meets at St. Paul's, Johnson City, Monday evenings. The Rev. Melvin E. Yearke is dean . . . THE REV. HERBERT N. GIBNEY, pastor of Epiphany Church, Hempstead, N. Y., conducted a preaching mission, Oct. 18-21, at Redeemer Church, Binghamton.

CHRISTIAN P. JENSEN

HEY! DIOGENES!

story of the week

RAILROAD CONDUCTORS often have good reasons for being cynical when they consider the numerous methods employed by members of the rail-traveling public in attempting free rides.

Some people have tried hiding in rest rooms in the vain hope that the conductor will pass them by as he collects his bits of pasteboard . . . a few have feigned illness in the lounge car for the same reason . . . still others have used the time-worn "I left my seat check in the diner!" when it's time to hand over their ticket.

Too, many is the time when these conductors have watched a stern parent lean towards one of their oversized offspring and warn in sharp undertones: "Slouch over! You want him to charge you full fare?"

Occasionally, the railman will feel obligated to ask the age of some "half-fare" passenger. He tries not to look too incredulous when the parental answer shoots back at him: "Billie, here, won't be 12 until next month." A quick glance at the lad's peach-fuzz chin tells him otherwise.

BUT THE CONDUCTOR on one of the Reading Railway's Jenkintown (suburban Philadelphia) locals had his faith in humanity restored during the Christmas rush.

"Kid got on in Jenkintown the other morning," said the veteran ticket puncher. "I'd seen him before . . . a half-farer on our line ever since he first rode the train in his mother's arms.

"He took a seat in the middle of the car. I wouldn't a-noticed him except he seemed to have an air about him . . . like he'd been promoted another grade in school.

"When I got to his seat, he looked up from his comic book, reached in his pocket and gave me TWO tickets, both half-fares!

"'But you're only ONE boy,' I said to him.

"'I know,' he beamed, 'but I had a birthday yesterday!' "

—DICK SUTCLIFFE

NORTH CAROLINA:

White Man, a Minority, is Being Punished—Conrad

SALISBURY—"The white man is a world minority and is fast losing face and prestige among the much more numerous colored millions in the world. This is a result of and a punishment for, our failure to reach out and make these, our brothers, a part of the Body of Christ!"

With words like these, the Rev. David F. Conrad, secretary for Negro Missions of the National Lutheran Council, and former member of synod, startled and challenged the more than 400 delegates and visitors to the 31st annual convention of the North Carolina Brotherhood, at St. John's, Salisbury, Nov. 17, in one of the three major addresses of the day.

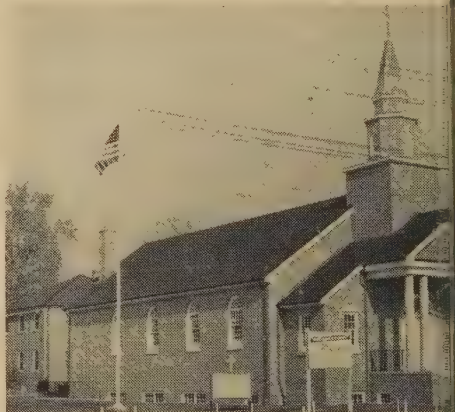
A native Tar Heel, in the middle of Tarheelia, Pastor Conrad got the ear and the respect of the core of North Carolina Synod's manpower, as he spoke straight from the shoulder concerning "Christ—The Hope of the World Amid Racial Tensions."

"Here at home," he said, "we're afraid of facing controversial questions . . . We're afraid of the truth! But, in Christ's Name, please discuss these questions and do what our Lord would have us do!"

"Neither Jesus, nor God the Father, taught anything about color," he continued. "We must get to know men of other races . . . We must see the American Negro, for instance, as the most potent force as tomorrow's missionaries, international spokesmen, diplomats, statesmen, because we who are white will not be welcome behind the ever-widening Iron Curtain . . .

"We must let go of our hate, our barriers of racial tension and let God have His way," the young minister pleaded. "No, it can't be done overnight, but as Christian men we must look above and beyond existing conditions and see the Man of God on the Cross, with arms stretched out to embrace every family of the earth—then color lines will vanish—Christ will see to that! The field is black unto the harvest!"

Dr. V. R. Cromer, Lenoir Rhyne College president, the keynote speaker of the convention theme, "Christ—The Hope of the



RECENTLY dedicated by Pastor Fred McLaughlin and members of St. Matthew's Church in Ozone Park, N. Y., is this colonial-style structure. "Another bulwark in the community announces the taller of the two signs

World," had prepared the way for the address on racial tensions by clearly defining the field of today's social problems, and laying down several clear-cut Christian principles of approach to the whole area.

Merwyn C. Fuss, president of the ULC Brotherhood, climaxed the convention day by saying to around 500 men and women at the banquet, that "though Christ continually calls men into His service, too many church members seem to be on perpetual vacation. We must, instead, be vividly aware of our Christian vocation, which demands all our intelligence, and all our concentration. We must lift our vocation from the secondary positions they now seem to occupy in so many instances and put them on the front line. We must exert ourselves to advance the Church of Christ!"

Highlight of the business sessions of the day was the announcement that 110 Brotherhoods had contributed during the year a total of \$47,941.76 to the Brotherhood Loan



ASTOR THOMAS GUINN leads one of the first services at Prince of Peace Church, Pleasant Hills (suburban Pittsburgh), Pa. Congregation, worshipping in borough hall, is a vital part of the Pittsburgh Synod's Home Mission emphasis this year (see "The Lutheran," Oct. 7), is one of 14 new missions established in the Greater Pittsburgh area since end of World War II

and Gift Fund, to be added to a \$150,000 revolving fund for aiding in the establishment and maintenance of home mission projects within the synod. The convention approved a \$60,000 goal for the same fund during the new year.

Executive officers elected for the new year included: M. Allen Fritz, Goldsboro, president; G. Dewey Arndt, Raleigh, vice president; J. J. Lentz, Sanford, secretary; Joe C. Ridenhour, Kannapolis, assistant secretary; Leonard Rhyne, Gastonia, treasurer; Leonard Moretz, Hickory, treasurer of the Loan and Gift Fund; Leon Rivers, High Point, statistical secretary; and Virgil Weathers, Shelby, extension secretary. Elected to the executive committee were: A. W. Fisher, Harold Black, E. W. Wagoner, W. A. Stamper, Aubrey Mauney, Dr. Conrad Park, and Dr. R. B. McAllister.

AUGSBURG CHURCH, Winston-Salem, has been chosen by Television Station WSJS-TV to be one of six churches in the city to present a series of Sunday afternoon Vesper programs. Augsburg will feature Pastor Ray R. Fisher. First Lutheran telecast was Dec. 6.

GROUND for a new six-room brick-veneer parsonage for Mt. Hermon Church, Route 5, Statesville, until recently a part of a two-congregation parish, was broken Aug. 16, was dedicated free of debt Nov. 22, to set some kind of a new record in synod.

THE REV. FRANK K. EFIRD, St. John's Church, Salisbury, has been appointed a member of the Special Allocation Commission for 1953 Receipts for the United Lutheran Church by Dr. Franklin C. Fry.

DAVID F. COOPER

NOVA SCOTIA:

Bridgewater Rally

Broadcast Over CKBW

HALIFAX—A Reformation Rally that filled St. Paul's Church, Bridgewater, to overflowing, was held on Nov. 1. The majority of the churches of Nova Scotia Synod co-operated. The sermon (broadcast over Station CKBW) was by the Rev. Luke Batdorf of the Rose Bay Parish.

OUR SAVIOUR CHURCH, the mission congregation at Dartmouth, celebrated the second anniversary of its organization by special events. A fellowship banquet in the Dartmouth Service Center was held Nov. 11, the actual date of organization. The speaker at the banquet was the Rev. Leonard Rodbourn, pastor of the Conquerall Parish, who came to synod recently from the West Indies. Pastor Rodbourn urged the members to keep their church a preaching church, a teaching church and a worshipping church. On the following Sunday morning Pastor Bieber received five new members into the church. At the Vesper service the special speaker was the Rev. Douglas A. Conrad, pastor of the Halifax parish.

THE ANNUAL SESSIONS of the Southern Conference were held in Dartmouth. Pastor Bald of Lunenburg preached in the morning. A full report of the School of Industrial Relations at Muhlenberg College was given by Pastor Conrad, who attended that school. A talk on evangelism was given by Pastor Bieber of Dartmouth. Pastor James Slack of the Midville parish spoke

NOVA SCOTIA . . .

at Vespers. The officers elected for the coming year were as follows: the Rev. Douglas A. Conrad, Halifax, president; J. Earle Morash, Chester, secretary-treasurer. Offerings were donated to the building fund of the Dartmouth mission.

THE FOURTH annual Laymen's Retreat was held by the men of Resurrection Church, Halifax, during the latter part of October. Topics presented by the men for discussion were as follows: "Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" by Harry Thornton; "The Church of God" by George Ernst; "Deacons" by Peter Petersen; "The Four Men" by E. R. Knox; a Bible Quiz by Pastor Conrad; greetings from Ervin Young, stewardship secretary of synod.

Martin Luther will open in the Paramount Theater in Halifax for a week's run on March 15. The Ministerial Association of the area will give its backing for the showing of this picture.

DOUGLAS A. CONRAD

OHIO:

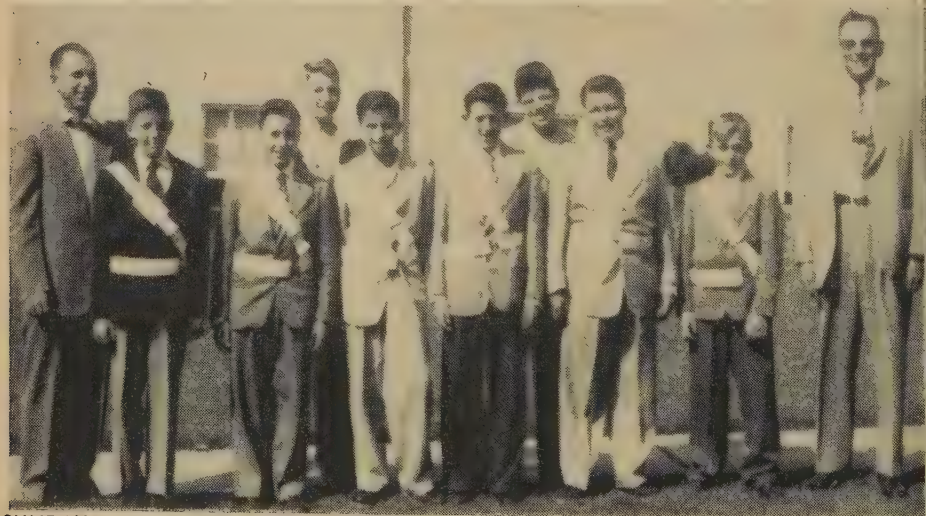
Albert Honored; Bosman "Layman of Year"

COLUMBUS—When 30 years of service in the Ellerton parish were closed by Dr. Raymond A. Albert Nov. 22, members of Salem Church held a farewell dinner and presented him with a new Chevrolet and a generous purse "for a well-earned vacation." A farewell at Slifer's church Nov. 29 brought the parsonage family a generous purse, too.

Dr. Albert, the sixth pastor of the 135-year-old congregation, will live in nearby West Carrollton, and will supply Stetler Church, Miamisburg.

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR St. Mark's Church, Fairborn, has named its "Layman of the Year," a tangible recognition for outstanding Christian stewardship. The church council names the one who has done the

Unique Safety Patrol in Willow Grove, Pa.



SUNDAY morning traffic whizzing through Willow Grove (suburban Philadelphia), Pa., and young and old Lutherans jamming pedestrian crosswalks on their way to Sunday school led laymen of Holy Trinity Church to take steps to organize a Sunday School Safety Patrol. With the help of the Keystone Automobile Club, such a patrol was organized, believed by Keystone officials to be the first Sunday school safety patrol in the United States. During a "lull" in their duties one recent Sunday morning, the patrol, along with sponsors, paused long enough to have the picture taken

most for his church in the way of time, talent and personal consecration and devotion. The 1953 award was made to Mr. J. Bosman, lay president of the congregation, intermediate teacher, general chairman for the proposed parish house, and chairman of the church ushers. The award carries with it a one-year membership in the Lutheran Laymen's Movement, to stimulate interest in the movement and present a challenge for even greater personal contribution in years to come. Past "Laymen of the Year" include Lee Schwerin and Linder Hoaff (co-winners), Luther Ice, and Carl Fisher.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, Fairborn, faced with inadequate facilities for the demands made in a rapidly expanding Air Force area (Wright-Patterson fields), is proceeding with plans for a large educational unit and youth center. A building canvass last month brought pledges of over \$78,000, and with 1954 budget needs, \$96,000. Wells Associates assisted with the program.

MEMBERS of Community Church, Hinckley, have completed a \$50,000 reconstruction program, at a cash cost of \$30,648, with only a \$5,500 debt.

A "TALENT SUNDAY" at Emmanuel Church, New Springfield, brought \$2,000 towards the new church building now under construction, reports Pastor C. B. A. Stacy. Last spring the finance committee divided \$350 among seven Sunday school classes. Each was to invest and increase \$50. On Oct. 25 the "Talent Money" was brought in. Some women had baked bread to use and increase their talent. Others did embroidery.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, Warren, held its third annual men's retreat Nov. 8. Speakers included Dr. H. O. O'Dell, Prof. Russell A. Auman, and Pastors E. E. Habig and C. A. Holmquist.

"WOMEN OF THE CHURCH" at Bethesda-in-the-Bay, Bay Village, are purchasing an electric organ for the mission congregation.

CHURCHES in the Wadsworth area held a readership training school for the fifth year.

E. RUDOLPH WALBORN



CALIFORNIA Synod assistant to the president, the Rev. Paul Romeis (right), watches Pastor Raymond Nickel (left) lay cornerstone for new United Lutheran Church in Santa Ana, Calif. Also shown is the Rev. Harold Schluntz of Orange, Calif. Dr. Karl Henry, of the Board of American Missions, was principal speaker

PENNSYLVANIA:

York Woman Elected Conference WMS Head

YORK—Mrs. W. W. Nace was elected president of the York Conference Women's Missionary Society in St. Matthew's Church, York. Other officers: Vice president, Laura Wakley; secretary, Mrs. Milner Bowser; statistical secretary, Mrs. Robert Koons; and treasurer, Mrs. Lucien Peeling. Guest speaker was Mrs. C. W. Baker, Jr., president of the WMS-ULCA.

COMMISSIONING SERVICES were held in Stine Church Dec. 13 for the Rev. and Mrs. Richard Ehrhart who will leave Jan. 1 for missionary work in Liberia.

THE LUTHERAN WELFARE SERVICE office, 563 W. Market St., York, is now the repository for all LWA and stewardship films for York Conference.

CARILLONIC BELLS have been installed in St. Peter's Church, York, in memory of the late Mrs. Bessie Gray MacKenzie. The bells can be played either independently or from inside the church.

Martin Luther "went over" so well that it is being shown in York for the second engagement even after an extended run on



THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY of First English Church in Bridgeport, Conn., was highlighted Oct. 1 by the participation of former pastors at the anniversary banquet at Fairfield Inn. Guests of honor included: seated, left to right, Dr. Luther A. Weigle, dean emeritus at Yale Divinity School; the Rev. Edgar R. Cooper, and the Rev. Oscar B. Noren, the latter, a son of the congregation; back row, Dr. Armin G. Weng, president of Chicago Seminary; the Rev. William O. Bruckner, the Rev. John C. Dries, and the Rev. Herbert D. Hrdlicka, pastor of First English Church

PA., YORK . . .

its first appearance in a local theater.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the Lutheran Welfare Society in York county has recommended the purchase of a property on West Market Street in York for a Lutheran Home for Aged.

DATES: The Luther League Missionary Rally for the York district in Grace Church, York, Jan. 25 and birthday party in St. Peter's, York, Feb. 15; Lenten movies in Union Church, York, March 16; banquet in Christ Church, Shrewsbury, April 20; and Intermediate Rally in St. Paul's Church, Spring Grove, May 4.

DR. DWIGHT PUTMAN, president of synod, preached the sermon in St. Paul's Church, Spring Grove, for the first installation service of conference officers Dec. 6.

PAUL LEVI FOULK

SOUTH CAROLINA:

Three Missions Started In Seven Weeks; Record

COLUMBIA—Some sort of a record was set in synod when three mission congregations were organized within a period of seven weeks. St. Mark's, Sullivan Island (near Charleston), led this parade with the organization being effected Sept. 13. Charter membership was 56. The congregation worships in an attractive stone church which was formerly a military post chapel. The gift to the synod and congregation was from Mr. and Mrs. J. C. W. Bischoff of Charleston.

SECOND IN LINE was St. John's which came into being Oct. 25, at Beaufort. There

were 52 confirmed and 74 baptized members. Organization was effected in St. Helena's Episcopal Church, led by the Rev. John Satterwhite.

THIRD IN THE TRIO was Reformation Church organized Nov. 1, the service being held in the First Methodist Church, Lancaster. This was led by the Rev. J. Shelton Moose, synodical field worker, who had led the preliminary work in this field. Confirmed membership is 54, baptized 78.

THE STORY CONTINUES: On Nov. 8, the first service was held in the Cayce (near West Columbia) area with an attendance of 85. The Rev. J. Shelton Moose led in getting this group together. Soon another congregation will be organized.

ONE MORE . . . Plans have been made to begin regular services in the Remount-Hanahan section of Charleston Heights, the first service being held Dec. 13. This work has also been led by the Rev. J. Shelton Moose.

An interesting feature in these developments, especially in the last two, is that a small group of interested people in the community were given names of others to visit, prospects were Lutherans and unchurched. These persons went out with great enthusiasm to do this work of personal evangelism. Thus an evangelism program got underway before the groups were officially organized.

ON DEC. 1, the United Lutheran Hour radio broadcasts got underway. This series of 10 messages by Lutheran pastors is broadcast each Sunday over 200 stations. Synods participating are: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia-Alabama. Special music for the series is by Lenoir Rhyne, Newberry, Roanoke, and Marion Colleges. The two speakers in the series from the South Carolina Synod are Dr. Paul M. Kinports, Charleston, and the Rev. Daniel M. Shull, Newberry.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION of the Brotherhood of synod was held in St. John's Church, Spartanburg, Nov. 13. Addresses were delivered by D. H. Blomstrom, vice president of the ULCA Brotherhood, and by J. H.

CAMPUS

WAGNER College entertained the parents of its students Nov. 14. The parents visited the dormitories, talked with faculty members, and saw the Wagner-Moravian football game. During the day, a parents' committee of 12 fathers was organized to promote closer relations between the college and the families of its students.

GETTYSBURG College's board of directors has approved a financial appeal among alumni and friends of the college for one million dollars with which to erect a new 400-capacity dormitory. The campaign will get underway as soon as personnel can be employed to direct the appeal.

SOUTHERN Seminary has let contracts for the construction of an eight-unit married couples' apartment dorm costing in the vicinity of \$65,000. About \$26,500 has been pledged toward the total cost.

WAGNER College's Leonard Pahl, one of 40 foreign students on the Staten Island campus, took part in an international relations round table on the Kate Smith television show Nov. 4. Pahl is from Germany.

A cappella choirs from ROANOKE, LENOIR RHYNE and NEWBERRY Colleges will perform on the weekly programs of the Southern Lutheran Hour which began its winter broadcasting series Dec. 6. The programs are recorded.

WAGNER College entertained 1,473 young people from churches in New York and New Jersey at football games this fall under a special reduced rate group admission plan. The same plan will be in effect for basketball home games.

GETTYSBURG College's board of directors reaffirmed its stand requiring attendance at daily chapel services on the part of members of the student body. There had been agitation among the student body for voluntary chapel attendance.

WAGNER College-Ohio Wesleyan basketball game, played in the Wagner gym on Jan. 2, will be televised over WPIX, channel 11.

SOUTH CAROLINA . . .

Oetgen of Atlanta, Ga. Officers elected were: W. Archie Dodgen, Graniteville, president; Dr. F. W. Kinard, Charleston, vice president; C. C. Howell, Jr., Greenville, vice

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president; Philip T. Kelly, Newberry, secretary; J. H. Kinard, Cayce, treasurer; Charles E. Koon, Columbia, promotional secretary; the Rev. Alton C. Clark, Anderson, pastoral advisor. Seven new brotherhoods were organized last year. The Loan and Gift Fund now totals \$45,310; goal is \$51,000.

THE REV. AND MRS. BEN M. CLARK, Wallhalla, were honored with a reception on Nov. 4, in observance of 25 years with St. John's congregation.

REDEEMER CHURCH, Newberry, has launched a long-range building program. This will include the erection of a new parish building and remodeling of the church.

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, Columbia, expects to begin construction in late January or early in February. The program will include erection of a church building.

SALVATOR LATORRE, of Columbia, member of Ascension Church, was awarded the Silver Beaver, highest award in scouting. Mr. LaTorre has been an active worker in scouting for a number of years.

THE REV. CURTIS E. DERRICK was formally installed as pastor of St. Luke's Church, Florence, Nov. 22 by Dr. Karl W. Kinard, president of synod . . . DR. L. GRADY COOPER was installed as pastor of Trinity Church, Elloree, on Nov. 22 by Dr. Kinard.

THE NEW parish building for Zion Church, near Lexington, was dedicated on Nov. 29. The pastor, the Rev. C. K. Wise, was assisted by Dr. Kinard.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, Aiken, held a service for the dedication of the new church plant on Dec. 6. Pastor John B. McCullough, Dr. Kinard and the Rev. Charles J. Shealy, Jr., of Savannah, Ga. (a former pastor), had part in the service. This church was relocated in order to have more room for expansion following the coming of so many people into this area in connection with the erection of the H-bomb plant.

WYNNE C. BOLIEK

DECEASED

Mrs. R. H. Cline

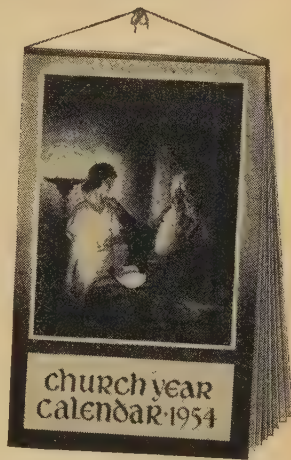
Mrs. Sara Alice Cline, wife of the late Dr. R. H. Cline, pastor for many years in

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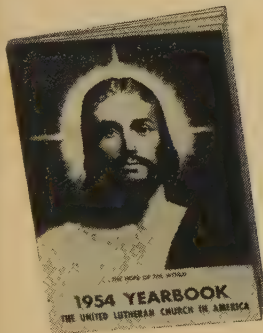
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the North Carolina and Virginia Synods, died Nov. 19 in Roanoke, Va. She was 89.

Born Feb. 16, 1864, in Catawba County, N. C., she is survived by two daughters, Mrs. John Fulenwider, Roanoke, Va., and Mrs. Myrtle Kelly, of Buffalo, N. Y., and two sons, Dr. Fred Cline, of Winchester, Va., and Dr. Harry Cline, of Roanoke, Va.

The funeral service was conducted in St. Mark's Church, Roanoke, by the Rev. J. Edgar Stockman assisted by Pastors J. B. Cassell and Paul Lottich. Burial was in Roanoke.

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Rev. E. H. Fafnis

The Rev. E. H. Fafnis, pastor of the Mountain, N. D., parish and former president of the Icelandic Synod, died in a Pembroke (N. D.) county hospital Oct. 13. He was 55.

Born in Iceland July 24, 1898, he left his native land in 1921 to go to Canada where he attended Jon Bjarnason Academy in Winnipeg in 1924 and 1925, attended the University of Manitoba and was graduated from Chicago Seminary in 1929. Following ordination, he served the Argyle parish in Manitoba until 1945.

He served Icelandic Synod as president for five years, as secretary for ten years. He directed a young people's camp, Sunrise Camp, at Gimli for 12 years, was an ex-officio member of the board of directors of the Borg Pioneer Memorial Home at Mountain, N. D., and served as advisor to guests there. He helped organize a Lutheran church in Cavalier and served as its pastor during its early days.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Ellen Freeman Fafnis, and three sons, Ronald, a student in Fargo, N. D.; Reynis, a student at Mayville State Teachers College; and Lowell, at home.

The funeral service was conducted Oct. 17 in Mountain Church, by the Rev. S. T. Guttormsson, assisted by Icelandic Synod President V. J. Eylands. Burial was in Mountain, N. D.

Rev. William M. Geiger

The Rev. William M. Geiger, retired pastor of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, died in White Haven, Pa., Nov. 24. He was 73.

Born in Ringtown, Pa., March 18, 1882, he was educated at Wagner College (1903), studied at Chicago Seminary and was graduated from Philadelphia Seminary in 1907. Ordained the same year by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, he served pastorates in Williamstown, Danville, Hobby (parish) and White Haven, Pa., the latter from 1915 until the summer of 1952 when he retired.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Mabel Leota Roat Geiger.

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can
command
my
conscience!"**

**"Man
only needs
Jesus Christ!"**



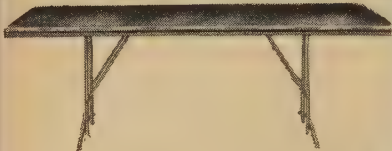
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The funeral service was conducted in St. Paul's Church, White Haven, Nov. 28 by Dr. Charles M. Cooper, president of the Ministerium, assisted by Pastors Frederick D. Haffner, Samuel Stauffer and Charles Ritter. Burial followed in Danville.

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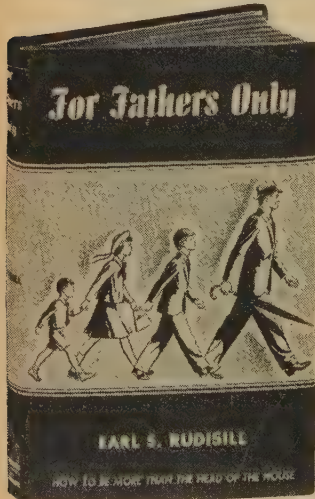
Dr. J. Allen Leas

Dr. J. Allen Leas, pastor emeritus of Holy Trinity Church, Chicago, died Nov. 18 in Los Angeles, Calif. He was 85.

Born Jan. 2, 1868, in Adams County, Pa., he went to Elkhart County, Ind., at an early age. He entered with the first class of the Chicago Seminary in 1891, and after graduation served parishes in Goshen, Ind.; Red Wing, Minn.; and Portland, Ore. While in Red Wing he organized three missions, and while in Portland he served as first president of the Pacific Synod, and first president of the board of directors of the Pacific Seminary. In 1916 he went to Holy Trinity Church, Chicago, Ill., where he served until his retirement in 1945.

Besides pastoral duties, he wrote "Day by Day With the Bible" devotionals for THE LUTHERAN for four years, served as secretary and later as president of the board of directors of the Chicago Seminary, and received a doctor of divinity degree from that seminary.

Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Harriet



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The Lutheran

Griffith and Mrs. Esther Klick; one granddaughter; and a half-brother, Elmer Leas of York, Pa.

The funeral service was conducted in Holy Trinity Church, Nov. 21, by Dr. Harmon J. McGuire, assisted by Dr. Armin G. Weng and the Rev. M. E. Boulton.

Mrs. George A. Royer

Mrs. Annabelle Augustini Royer, widow of the late Rev. George A. Royer, who served pastorates in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, and Ohio prior to his death in 1940, died Nov. 22. She was 87.

Born Aug. 9, 1866, in Addison, Pa., she had been living with a daughter in Milford, Ohio, since 1937 when her husband retired.

Surviving are two daughters, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and a sister.

Mrs. John F. Seibert

Mrs. Florence A. Seibert, wife of the late Dr. John F. Seibert, died in Woodstock, Ill., Nov 20. She was 85.

Born Sept. 17, 1868, in Rossville, Pa., she was educated in Pennsylvania. With her husband she served parishes in Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska, before he became mission superintendent for northern Illinois, first president of the Illinois Synod, and later after the United Lutheran Church was formed, secretary for English Missions of the Board of American Missions.

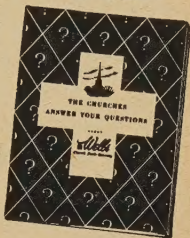
She was one of the organizers of the Women's Missionary Society of Chicago Conference, and also took an early and active part in the Lutheran Women's League of Chicago and Vicinity.

Surviving are three sons, William Roy Seibert, the Rev. Luther Y. Seibert, pastor of Elmhurst Church, Elmhurst, Ill., and Charles A. Seibert; and three daughters, Mrs. Edith Lambert, Mrs. Florence Elliott, and Mrs. Ruth Metzler; 15 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. John E. Cooperrider in Calvary Church, Chicago. Interment also was in Chicago.

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In conclusion

WINSTON CHURCHILL seemed disillusioned and weary in the statement he sent to Stockholm where he received a Nobel prize this month. "The fearful question confronts us," he wrote. "Have our problems got beyond our control?"

Churchill has struggled with the stubborn problem of how to insure peace. At 79, he begins to doubt that it can be done. It seems rather late in life for a man of his experience to realize that our problems have always been beyond our control.

For a century we have suffered from an illusion which was carried over from the remarkable success of the sciences in solving practically any mechanical problem. Our engineers can build impossible bridges or design planes to circle the earth in no time at all. Therefore—it is easy to go on—our psychiatrists ought to be able to clear up all our personality problems. Our statesmen should be able, by careful social planning, to solve any national or international problem.

BUT WE AREN'T MACHINES. We don't react according to formula. We can't be predicted and our behavior can't be planned. The chemist who discovers a way to make artificial cotton can't find out how to keep his wife from being hysterical when she doesn't get a new mink coat.

In ancient times people knew the world's problems were too much for them. Our modern optimism is new and fraudulent. Things go uphill and downhill in this world, sometimes better, sometimes worse. If we depend on ourselves, we are likely to end up with a terrible sense of failure.

That's why Christmas is important. It tells us we don't have to depend on our-

selves. In the midst of the darkness and disappointments of our life, God is with us. The Child at Bethlehem proved that. There is peace and joy for us from God in the midst of our struggles and frustrations. God offers us mercy and forgiveness. However things turn out, we can hum a cheerful tune at the end of the day, for with us is God.

Without Jesus, God would be impossible to imagine or trust. How can a world in which there are constantly alternating joy and sorrow, success and failure, be the creation of a loving God? How can the world that crucified Jesus be any sort of a decent place? We can answer these questions. The crucifixion wasn't the end of the story. God's purposes aren't necessarily fulfilled within the limits of human time.

Sad-eyed Jews, who suffered under the tyranny of the Roman police state, heard a song of peace and hope. The Saviour had come to release believers from their hopelessness. World problems would not disappear magically. Men were still obliged to do their best to solve them. But the pressure was gone. The horizon had been stretched out into eternity.

CHRISTMAS SHOULD come like a fresh tide of faith, lifting us above all weariness. We try to keep our problems under control, but those we can't manage we turn over at the end of the day to the Father who understands our limitations.

"Merry Christmas" is a useful phrase that we shall use many times this week, although it lost its freshness a long time ago. It still points in the right direction. Christmas can be merry, in a hospital, a slave labor camp, or even an editorial office. Christmas tells us our Saviour has come.

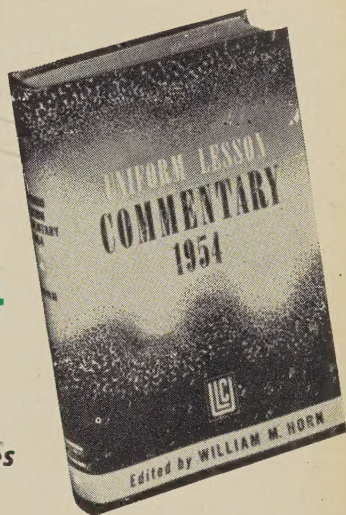
—ELSON RUFF

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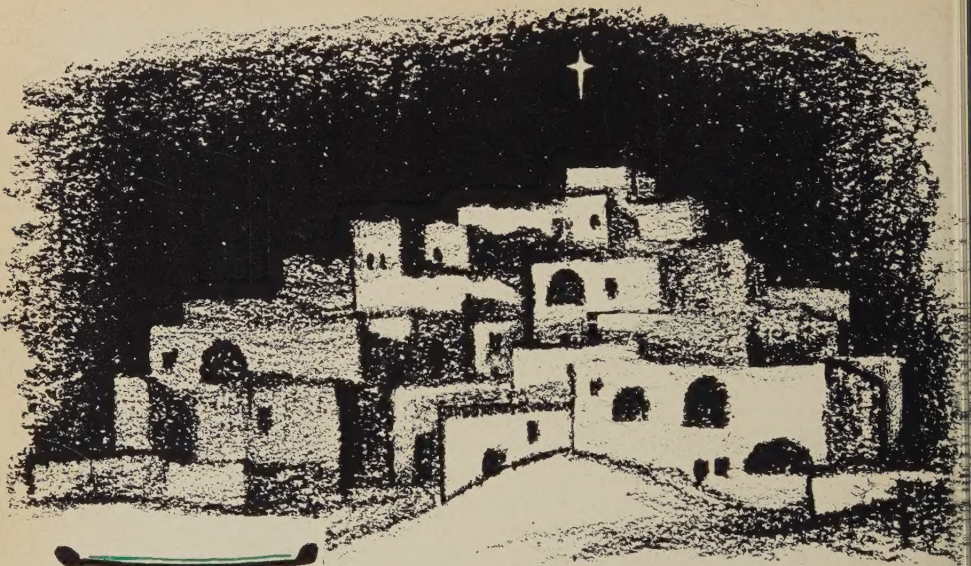
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Almost two thousand years ago an innkeeper slept and did not see the light above his stable. **T**he heavens were filled with glad Hosannas but no one in the town awoke. **T**hrough the deserted street only a few hill folk made their way to the manger to worship at His side.

How like the heedless citizens are we. **I**t is the opportunity within our midst we often most neglect. **T**his Christmas time, when hope renews and promise is fulfilled, we ask a greater strength. **E**ach day should bring occasion to witness for our Lord. **W**e must speak out as Christians. **W**e must act. **I**f not, we also sleep, while others track the star.

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